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Official Records

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New York

President: Mr. Deiss ..... (Switzerland)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Hasan Kleib (Indonesia), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.

Agenda items 62 and 12 (*continued*)

New Partnership for Africa's Development: progress in implementation and international support

(b) Causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa

Reports of the Secretary-General (A/65/152, A/65/165 and A/65/167)

Notes by the Secretary-General (A/65/62 and A/65/62/Add.1)

2001-2010: Decade to Roll Back Malaria in Developing Countries, Particularly in Africa

Note by the Secretary-General (A/65/210)

Mr. Barton (United States of America): The United States welcomes the reports of the Secretary-General on the New Partnership for Africa's Development and the promotion of durable peace in Africa (A/65/152), on monitoring mechanisms for Africa's development (A/65/165), and on the Decade to Roll Back Malaria (A/65/210). Those areas are each important individually, but they also have a direct impact on each other. We appreciate the opportunity to address them together.

The United States is committed to addressing the prevention and treatment of malaria, HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis and to reducing their burden worldwide. Through the Global Health Initiative and our contributions to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, the United States will continue to lead in the fight against those diseases by focusing on strengthening health systems and meeting broader health challenges, including child and maternal health, family planning and neglected tropical diseases. In that regard, I am pleased to note the recent United States pledge to seek to contribute an additional $4 billion to the Global Fund for 2011 to 2013, an increase of 38 per cent.

The President's Malaria Initiative (PMI) is a core component of our Global Health Initiative and the fight against malaria, as well as a key part of the United States foreign assistance strategy. Under the new United States malaria strategy, our goal is to achieve an Africa-wide impact by significantly reducing the burden of malaria for at-risk populations in sub-Saharan Africa, thereby removing malaria as a major public health problem and promoting economic growth and development throughout the region.

Since 2005, the Initiative has contributed to a rapid scaling up of malaria prevention and treatment measures across 15 countries in Africa by funding the purchase of more than 57 million life-saving antimalarial treatments and more than 27 million insecticide-treated nets. During 2009 alone, the Initiative reached more than 50 million people with preventive measures or life-saving drugs. It also provided support to countries to improve the management of antimalarial drugs and other essential

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medical commodities, which has resulted in improvements in supply chain systems in focus countries.

Many of the PMI focus countries are now reporting significant reductions in under-five mortality, and there is strong and growing evidence that the scaling up of malaria prevention and treatment efforts has been a major factor in those reductions. That progress is a result of the collective actions of African Governments, the United States and other concerned donor nations, multilateral organizations, including the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, the United Nations, the World Health Organization and the World Bank, and non governmental organizations.

In addition, by reducing the burden of malaria in highly endemic countries, the Initiative allows critical resources and overstretched health workers to concentrate on controlling other childhood illnesses and helps to reduce malaria's drain on economic growth and development in Africa.

In the past year, the United States has increased its aid to Africa by 9 per cent to $7.5 billion. However, we should not measure aid as an input, but rather look at outputs. As President Obama said during his address to this Assembly last month:

> "Let us move beyond the old, narrow debate over how much money we are spending and instead let us focus on results — whether we are actually making improvements in people's lives" (*A/65/PV.9*).

The United Nations has an important role to play in assisting Africa, especially sub-Saharan African countries, to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. United Nations development agencies, such as the United Nations Development Programme, can make unique contributions by helping countries to build governance institutions that can bring about political stability, effective and democratic Governments, and economic freedom for their citizens.

We welcome the efforts of the United Nations to improve the monitoring mechanisms for Africa's development and its focus on results, rather than inputs, and on the commitments of donor nations, as well as African Governments. In our endeavour to monitor results effectively, we must ensure that there is true value added and coherence among new and existing monitoring mechanisms.

The key for Africa to meet its Millennium Development Goals is to create the conditions for sustained and broad-based economic growth, so that it can break away from dependence on development assistance. As the Secretary-General's report highlights, countries in Africa enjoyed an average growth rate of 4.65 per cent from 2000 to 2007. We must build on that achievement. To that end, we support efforts of the New Partnership for Africa's Development to promote democratization, good governance and economic transparency, as well as enhanced regional- and national-level infrastructure and food security.

The United States continues to support efforts to enhance the private sector in Africa. Since 1999, the United States has provided $12 billion in trade capacity assistance to developing countries, and the African Growth and Opportunity Act has contributed to enhanced trade with Africa. In the first half of 2010, trade under that Act totalled $33.1 billion, a 57 per cent increase from the same period in 2009.

We remain committed to reducing the debt burden of African States and to ensuring that resources are freed up to support the MDGs and broad-based growth. We note that sub-Saharan Africa has benefited from $100 billion in debt cancellation to date.

As the Secretary-General reports, the number of African States in armed conflict has declined dramatically, from 14 in the late 1990s to four today. But much needs to be done to sustain the peace. Democratization and development must go hand in hand. State institutions must be strengthened and regional cooperation deepened. Peacekeeping must evolve into peacebuilding. And post-conflict recovery must be the basis for long-term sustainable development.

Africa's economic development is the only way for us to achieve the MDGs. Fighting diseases such as malaria and rooting out the maladies of conflict and poor governance are keys to growth. The United States is deeply committed to being a constructive force and to helping to advance progress on those related and important issues.

Mr. Jomaa (Tunisia) (*spoke in French*): I have the pleasure and the honour to speak before the General Assembly today to debate the important points on its agenda regarding the development of Africa. I would first of all like to thank the Secretary-General

for his reports and notes concerning the items under consideration (A/65/152, A/65/165, A/65/167, A/65/62, A/65/62/Add.1 and A/65/210), which highlight the efforts made by Africa to rid itself of underdevelopment, while also setting out the gaps and existing constraints, including in the area of crucial international support.

My delegation would like to associate itself with the statements delivered this morning by the representative of Malawi, on behalf of the Group of African States, and by the representative of Yemen, on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

Since its establishment in 2001, the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) has been a driving force in the continent's economic recovery and its integration into the world economy. NEPAD has given Africa a greater voice and more responsibility in choosing its own economic and social policies. It has also provided the necessary framework for the establishment of stronger partnerships with other development partners.

Tunisia welcomes NEPAD's integration into African Union structures. As an African Union technical body, the NEPAD secretariat, which has now become the Planning and Coordinating Agency for the initiative, is working to facilitate and coordinate th implementation of priority programmes and projects on the regional and continental levels.

The entire world today agrees that Africa has made significant progress in various areas in the first nine years of the existence of this development programme. The report (A/65/152) of the Secretary-General gives us a picture of that progress in the various aspects of NEPAD's infrastructure development programmes in Africa, which focus on the areas of energy, transportation, water and sanitation and information and telecommunications technologies.

The report also points to the significant progress made in the implementation of the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme.

In the areas of health and education, the NEPAD Agency continues to carry out numerous projects aimed at strei thening Africa's capacities.

With regard to gender equality and women's empowerment, Africa continues to remain committed to supporting and promoting the socio economic status of women. The decision taken at the fourteenth African Union Summit in February to establish a new fund for African women reflects that political will.

With regard to the current uncertain and fragile global economic recovery, the implementation of NEPAD and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals on the continent require determination and steadfast leadership on the part of the continent and its development partners, so as to ensure the attainment of the commitments within the timelines that have been set to achieve the Development Goals. In that regard, my delegation reiterates the urgent need to establish a monitoring mechanism under the auspices of the United Nations to follow up all the commitments made with regard to Africa's development, as clearly underscored in the political declaration on Africa's development needs (resolution 63/1) and in the report of the Secretary-General on the matter (A/65/165).

Promoting sustainable peace and development in Africa requires concrete, sustained and solidarity-based efforts on the part of the international community. Such efforts should address the underlying causes of underdevelopment and the conflicts on the continent, with a view to establishing an environment conducive to investment and sustainable economic growth in Africa. Tunisia, which was ranked first in the African continent in the area of peace and security by the Global Peace Index, believes that Africa's efforts in that regard should be met by a significant commitment on the part of the international community, a better understanding of Africa's specific needs and greater coordination of policies and programmes.

Allow me to refer to a specific phenomenon that is a major source of social tension and poverty in Africa, namely, youth unemployment. Given that about 60 per cent of the continent's population is under the age of 25, unemployment among young people in Africa poses a serious threat both for African countries and for the international community owing to the disturbances to society and other repercussions caused by this phenomenon.

While this phenomenon has been present for quite some time, unemployment among young people has in recent years taken on alarming proportions. According to the International Labour Office, 21 per cent of young people between the ages of 15 and 24 in sub-Saharan Africa are affected. The situation is even

worse in North Africa, where 25.6 per cent of young people are unemployed.

It is therefore up to the international community, in particular our development partners, to work together with Africa to create an environment promoting active participation by young people in the economic, social and political development of their continent, as well as to seize the opportunity provided by the International Year of Youth. That initiative, launched by Tunisia's President and adopted by the General Assembly, seeks to promote initiatives to engender the ideals of peace, freedom, progress and solidarity among young people.

Moreover, development partners should redouble their efforts as part of an integrated approach to help Africa overcome the underlying causes of tension on the continent, including unemployment, food insecurity, climate change, water shortages and desertification.

Various actions, including relieving debt burdens, facilitating the physical movement of people, increasing foreign direct investment, increasing official development assistance, encouraging the transfer of technology and strengthening capacities in order to take greater advantage of preferential treatment schemes, are now needed to contribute to the achievement of sustainable peace and development on the African continent.

Malaria continues to be one of the main causes of illness and death among children under the age of five in Africa. Among other things, given the significant number of victims affected annually — more than 1 million people — this illness causes enormous losses to the continent's gross domestic product. Tunisia is conscious of the impact of the disease and its devastating effects on economic and social development. In spite of the fact that we are a developing country with limited resources, our President, who has advocated the creation and implementation of a robust mechanism for national solidarity and has called for the international community also to set up a global solidarity fund, an idea that the General Assembly subsequently adopted, took a decision on 4 October, during the Replenishment Conference of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, to support the Fund's efforts by making a financial contribution in the amount of $2 million for the 2011-2013 period.

In conclusion, based on our deeply held belief in our common future and in the imperative need for cooperation and solidarity with African countries, Tunisia is resolved to work together with African countries to make the continent a zone of active partnership and to establish in Africa the conditions for sustainable peace and development. The priority task for all interested stakeholders now is to honour their commitments to Africa.

Mr. Tommo Monthe (Cameroon) (*spoke in French*): Allow me to begin by congratulating the Secretary-General for the reports that he has made available to the General Assembly under agenda items 62 and 12 dealing with the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) (A/65/167) and the 2001-2010 Decade to Roll Back Malaria in Developing Countries, Particularly in Africa (A/65/210).

I would also like to state that my delegation associates itself with the statements made on those reports by the representatives who spoke on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and the Group of African States.

This joint debate on the aforementioned items is taking place a few weeks after the High-level Plenary Meeting on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) held from 20 to 22 September on the margins of the current session. That High-level Meeting was heralded in the report of the Secretary-General as being an opportunity for the international community to consider in detail the situation in Africa. Allow me, therefore, to provide a quick overview of the progress made on the implementation of NEPAD, taking into account, on the one hand, the report of the Secretary-General and, on the other hand, the draft outcome document of the High-level Plenary Meeting on the Millennium Development Goals (resolution 64/299), particularly with respect to Africa.

My delegation agrees with the observation made by the Secretary-General that, in the context of the current fragile and uncertain global recovery, the implementation of NEPAD and the achievement of the MDGs require determination and unfailing leadership, both from African countries and from development partners, in order to go from theory to concrete results. With respect to Africa's responsibility, it is clear that the countries of the continent have drawn up their own national development programmes in accordance with

their own priorities, the NEPAD programme and the Millennium Development Goals.

As for the agencies, the African Development Bank and the Economic Commission for Africa are continuing their mission, which involves carrying out a certain number of projects and programmes within the process of implementing NEPAD. In addition, the regional economic communities, which play a leading role in the context of economic integration, are striving to fulfil their role as key players in the implementation of projects at the subregional level. I am thinking, for example, of the Economic Community of West African States, the Economic Community of Central African States and the Southern African Development Community, in particular.

Lastly, at the continental level, in February 2010, the African Union approved the integration of NEPAD into the Union's structures and processes and set up the NEPAD Planning and Coordination Agency, whose mandate is to implement projects and programmes that are priorities at the regional and continental levels in Africa.

At those different levels, efforts are under way to implement programmes in the different sectors identified by the MDG Africa Steering Group, for example, agriculture and food security, education, health, commerce infrastructure and facilitation, as well as statistical systems.

However, recent studies carried out by the Steering Group reveal that, even if some progress has been seen, much remains to be done in the area of official development assistance (ODA), debt management, foreign direct investment flows and trade.

In the area of ODA, Africa will probably only receive $12 billion of the $25 billion increase that was considered at the Gleneagles summit, mainly because contributions from the main donors are lower than what was originally planned. As for the debt, efforts are being made to provide relief for African countries, both within the framework of the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative and the Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative, as well as through bilateral debt relief. Thus, on 1 July 2010, 23 African countries, including Cameroon, reached the completion point and benefited from debt relief under the HIPC Initiative. However, we know that the economic crisis has undermined those efforts, producing an adverse effect on Africa's debt levels.

With respect to foreign direct investment, investment destined for Africa dropped by more than 36 per cent in 2009, because of the economic crisis.

Lastly, when it comes to trade, the Doha Round negotiations have made very little progress towards the development of an agreement on issues of concern to Africa, including the end of export subsidies for agricultural commodities.

Those gaps, which have been pointed out in the report of the Secretary-General, are those that largely undermine the implementation of NEPAD. However, we are hopeful that the progress seen in the implementation of NEPAD, such as that pointed out in the report of the Secretary-General, will be continued and that the recommendations that he has made will be followed up by action. Among the signs of progress we see, for example, a strengthening at the institutional level of the African Peer Review Mechanism, involving the integration of the newly created African Partner Country Network and its addition to the structures and processes of the African Union.

The recommendations made by the Secretary-General include the need for African countries to continue to effectively implement NEPAD's progress and programmes; the importance for all of the stakeholders to design an outreach strategy to strengthen awareness and public opinion at the national, regional, continental and international levels with respect to the vision, goals and objectives of NEPAD; the strengthening of the institutional capacity of the Commission of the African Union; the strengthening of the capacities of regional economic communities; the need to place a priority on investment in agriculture, given its importance in development, poverty reduction and the reduction of food insecurity; greater support for African women, given their major role in agriculture; and the strengthening of cooperation between rich countries and multilateral development agencies, on the one hand, and Africa, on the other.

As for the High-level Plenary Meeting on the MDGs and its outcome document, although we ought to be pleased with the commitments that were reconfirmed by world leaders, we are forced to acknowledge that the repetition of those commitments also reveals their increasingly uncertain nature.

But how do we implement all of those recommendations? The answer is to be found primarily in a greater commitment from Africa itself, but also in ensuring that development partners respect their commitments, as stated by both the Secretary-General in the conclusions to his report on NEPAD and the outcome document of the High-level Meeting on the MDGs.

Africa is not only weakened by underdevelopment and poor development. It is also literally sickened by pandemics such as malaria, a subject covered under agenda item 12, which we are considering. Over the past 10 years, the efforts to control malaria, a disease that afflicts Africa in particular, have captured the attention of political leaders and attracted funding at the international, regional and national levels.

At the African Summit to Roll Back Malaria, held in Abuja in 2000, African heads of State and Government voiced their determination to undertake intensive efforts to fight against malaria. World leaders included among the Millennium Development Goals the goal of bringing malaria under control and of starting to roll it back before 2015. The Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, appointed a Special Envoy for Malaria. Various stakeholders involved in the fight against the disease laid out a Global Malaria Action Plan, and in October 2009 in New York, heads of State launched the African Leaders Malaria Alliance.

Given the impact of malaria, in particular in developing countries, the international community proclaimed 2001-2010 as the Decade to Roll Back Malaria in Developing Countries, Particularly in Africa. In order to evaluate the progress achieved in reaching the goals set for 2010, the Secretary-General, in accordance with resolutions 62/180 and 64/79, has presented us with the report contained in document A/65/210. My delegation would like to thank him for that report.

There are three aspects in particular of the report that drew my delegation's attention. These are contained in paragraphs 17 to 26, having to do with the financing of malaria control; paragraphs 51 to 54, having to do with the impact of control programmes in the World Health Organization (WHO) African Region; and paragraphs 66 to 78, which contain the summary and recommendations of the report.

First, on financing, we welcome the increase in disbursements, which have now gone from $35 million in 2000 to over $1 billion in 2008. In that regard, we recognize the commitment of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria and of the United States Agency for International Development and the United Kingdom Department for International Development. We note with satisfaction that it was in the WHO African Region that the disbursements for malaria made by outside agencies were increased by a factor of 28 between 2000 and 2007. But despite that progress, we cannot help but notice that the total level of financing remains below the annual amount targeted in the Global Malaria Action Plan.

In terms of the impact of programmes to combat malaria, we are happy to note the progress achieved, in particular in Africa, as highlighted in paragraphs 51 to 54 of the Secretary-General's report. In general, current trends, if they continue, suggest that intensive antimalaria efforts could help many countries in Africa to achieve a two-thirds reduction in child and infant mortality by 2015, as envisaged by MDG 4.

Finally, the recommendations made by the Secretary-General are of genuine interest to my delegation. A number of those recommendations highlight the need to strengthen the fight against malaria and boost the distribution of treated mosquito nets, diagnostic tests and access to artemisinin combination therapies, as well as the importance of pursuing foreign assistance, enhancing respect for regulations that govern the quality of medications on the market and strengthening the capacities of health ministries. Those are all measures that would support national efforts in the fight against malaria.

To conclude, I would like to reiterate my delegation's gratitude to the Secretary-General and to express to him, to his Special Envoy for Malaria, to the Director-General of WHO and to all the people working on the ground our support for the work carried out in the fight against malaria. In general, and this applies to malaria as well as to the New Partnership for Africa's Development, the United Nations must create a structured action plan, including an outline of all of their contributions to the implementation of the antimalaria programmes, for a set period of two or three years, along with a clear view of the indicators used to measure results and the distribution of responsibilities. This would allow us, when all is said

and done, to take stock of the progress made and of what remains to be accomplished.

The Secretary-General could also, in proposing programmes for the coming year to the Committee for Programme and Coordination, take another look at the three current subprogrammes under programme 9 of the proposed strategic framework for the period 2010-2011, in order to ensure that the level of work, financial resources, administrative structure and personnel employed is appropriate in terms of quantity and quality. Close coordination with the African Group would be entirely appropriate in that regard.

Mr. Onemola (Nigeria): Nigeria commends the Secretary-General for his detailed reports on agenda items 62 (a) and (b) and appreciates the opportunity to participate in this deliberation.

We also wish to commend the Planning and Coordinating Agency of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) for its remarkable and innovative approaches in coordinating the various clusters of its activities. We are pleased to note that encouraging progress has been made in the areas of transnational infrastructure, science and technology, health, agriculture and partnerships with the United Nations system.

We are aware of the fact that the African development targets on the NEPAD platform cannot be met without resolving the various challenges confronting member States. However, we believe that these challenges can be surmounted with renewed determination and recommitment to the goals set.

My delegation aligns itself with the statements made by the representatives of the African Group and the Group of 77 and China. We would like to comment on the following sub-items.

On sub-item (a), the economic and development challenges facing Africa are indeed unique, and approaches to resolving them must lend credence to a development philosophy that is cognizant of local circumstances and recognizes the need to use subregional, regional and international development machinery, thereby setting a new paradigm in charting a development path for Africa. Those challenges led to the creation of NEPAD a decade ago, as Africa's blueprint, with emphasis on ownership and partnership geared towards guaranteeing Africa's economic renewal and development.

Efforts to attain the targets set for each of the nine clusters identified by NEPAD have renewed the call for all African countries to build on existing progress and to fully identify with the operational blueprint of NEPAD. In this regard, we note that the failures of past development plans in Africa have had less to do with a lack of available frameworks than with haphazard implementation. My delegation therefore commends the Economic Commission for Africa, the African Development Bank and the NEPAD Planning and Coordinating Agency on their efforts to implement NEPAD programmes and objectives.

Since the inception of NEPAD, there has been renewed confidence that, through its ongoing strategies, Africa will be able to resolve its underdevelopment crisis. It is, however, imperative to ensure that NEPAD's broader mandate remains in focus. In this regard, divergent interests must be set aside for the collective good, and commitments by Member States towards successful partnership must remain unwavering.

It behooves individual Member States to strive harder to mainstream the development agenda into their sectoral programmes, using regional blocs as tools for continental economic integration. Nigeria commends the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) for its various contributions that culminated in the signing of the first regional agricultural compact. We hope that such positive steps will be replicated in other subregions and integrated into the larger African continent.

It has been recognized worldwide that NEPAD stands on the planks of good governance, capacity-building and partnership. In order to garner the required momentum that would guarantee steady progress towards the implementation of the Partnership's objectives, we must not lose sight of the need to boost the continent's capacity to govern and develop long-term policies.

The current dearth in human capital can be addressed through a conscious focus on human capacity-building, which would ultimately coalesce into institutional development. We believe that, rather than substituting for them, it is better to build national capacities in a sustainable way. This will also prevent a culture of dependency.

Member countries should also leverage the enhanced support of the United Nations system in a

drive towards attaining the Ten-Year Capacity-Building Programme for the African Union. We believe that will boost Africa's ability to mobilize, manage and sustain economic development, as well as to ensure that successes achieved are not short-lived. In this connection, Nigeria welcomes the innovative NEPAD e-schools demonstration project.

My delegation appreciates the position of the Group of Eight in affirming its official development assistance commitments, as well as its resolve to enhance aid effectiveness. In particular, we welcome the Muskoka Initiative on child mortality and maternal health, as we believe that no development goal substantially supersedes another.

NEPAD no doubt opens up opportunities for Africa to fast-track its Millennium Development Goals, but we also believe that its celebrated initiatives depend largely on scaled-up and consistent development assistance for their full implementation. We therefore call on Member States and friends of Africa to adopt a complementary hands-on approach that would lead to the fulfilment of the cardinal purpose of NEPAD.

Nigeria firmly believes that NEPAD's goals of building strong economic infrastructure and creating a favourable environment for investments remain crucial. It is through this approach that Africa can be pulled out of its present economic difficulties to enable it to prosper as it should.

Turning to sub-item (b), much has been said about the inextricable link between durable peace and sustainable development in Africa. A continent as diverse as Africa can best realize partnership goals when rancorous impediments give way to lasting peace and security. My delegation recognizes that conflict, no matter its extent, poses serious challenges to the proper integration of African States, as it hampers the successful implementation of the goals of NEPAD.

My delegation calls for the continued utilization of the Continental Early Warning System, which is aimed at preventing conflicts. In addition, Member States should embrace an effective mechanism to mediate conflicting interests. It is for this reason that Nigeria, in order to highlight the importance we attach to conflict prevention, chose the theme of preventive diplomacy for its open debate during its presidency of the Security Council last year. There is no doubt that the prevention of conflicts is a less expensive option for maintaining peace and security in the world. Indeed, it is becoming evident that preventing conflicts is the best way to preserve development gains. There is therefore a need to continue to give new impetus to conflict-prevention strategies.

Poverty is both the cause and the effect of conflicts in Africa, which are of global concern because their ripple effects go beyond African frontiers. It is therefore the responsibility of all to engage as positive catalysts in actualizing a conflict-free Africa and to ensure that the achievements so far are further consolidated. In this regard, we commend the efforts of NEPAD in reconstructing post-conflict countries and in providing credible transition and exit strategies. We equally call for continued financial and institutional support for the Peacebuilding Commission.

Nigeria currently chairs ECOWAS. We are therefore pleased to report that leaders of the organization have made substantial progress in bringing lasting peace and stability to within the borders of the subregion. That has been instrumental in improving conflict situations in West Africa. We believe that these critical steps will usher in an enabling environment for development as peace and security prevail.

In the same vein, the continued efforts of United Nations peacekeeping forces and of the African Union Peace and Security Council have become invaluable resources in the pursuit of peace and sustainable development across Africa.

Let me now turn to agenda item 12. Nigeria recognizes the health burden posed by malaria on the people of Africa. Although there have been quantifiable improvements in curbing the scourge over the past 10 years, the goals of the Roll Back Malaria campaign have still not been realized. In no small measure, malaria still constitutes a barrier to economic and social development across Africa.

My delegation commends the growing political commitment in the fight against malaria. We advocate closer cooperation between Roll Back Malaria partnerships and the international community in order to develop the capacity to fully implement individual country strategic plans and ensure the achievement of the Abuja targets.

In the same vein, Nigeria sees the need for an accelerated pace in combating this disease. We therefore call for more international donors and partners to complement existing local resources. My delegation strongly believes that an Africa free from malaria, in which its citizens peacefully coexist, will be better situated on the path towards achieving the much-needed African development targets.

Finally, although the challenges facing Africa look daunting, they are not insurmountable. With effective harmonization and coordination, the targets set out in the different frameworks could propel Africa to become a land of opportunity. In this connection, my delegation calls for the urgent fulfilment of the pledges of aid made to Africa at various international forums. We are confident that a new Africa free of hunger, disease and poverty will meaningfully contribute to global economic prosperity, peace and stability.

Mr. McNee (Canada): Canada is pleased once again this year to join this important debate on Africa. Africa is a continent rich in its cultures, diversity and history. Many African countries have made important progress in recent years, and significant parts of the continent are moving in the right direction. They have seen more free and fair elections and more prudent economic management, with more reform-minded and democratic leadership. One of the most significant developments has been the maturation of African institutions that promote regional integration and security.

Much remains to be done to assist African countries to achieve the Millennium Development Goals and to build stable political and economic institutions. Achieving the Millennium Development Goals is a shared responsibility based on commitment, partnership and perseverance.

Canada is doing its part to help Africa achieve the Millennium Development Goals. Canada met its Group of Eight (G-8) commitment to double aid to Africa from 2003-2004 levels, to $2.1 billion. Furthermore, Canada reaffirmed its commitment to double international assistance from 2002 levels by 2011. This will increase Canada's total international assistance to approximately $5 billion. As part of the joint G-8 pledge on food security, Canada will more than double its investment in food security and provide $600 million in increased funding over three years, reaching $1.18 billion in overall funding.

As President of the G-8 and the Group of 20 (G-20) for 2010, Canada ensured that Africa's voice was heard in this process. G-8 leaders had a substantive discussion with African leaders at the Muskoka Summit on peace and security and development issues. Consultations with African countries in the lead-up to the Muskoka Summit helped to shape the G-8 initiative on maternal, newborn and child health, which will see the mobilization of more than $7 billion. G-8 and African leaders also agreed to work closely together to combat international narcotics trafficking, particularly in West Africa and the Americas.

Canada invited the leaders of Malawi, as Chair of the African Union, and of Ethiopia to the G-20 Toronto Summit to help ensure a stronger voice for Africa. Leaders held important discussions on a range of actions to support economic recovery and define the path forward for strong, sustainable and balanced global growth. This included fulfilling commitments for $350 billion in capital increases for multilateral development banks and an ambitious replenishment for the concessional lending facilities of those banks, especially the African Development Fund and the International Development Association.

Canada has also untied all of its food aid and has committed to untie all bilateral assistance by 2013. Not only will this improve aid by increasing its impact, it will enable us to respond better to the needs of developing countries. Private sector expansion is an important component of overall development. Canada is a significant economic partner for Africa, with more than 290 Canadian companies operating in over 36 countries.

The Canadian Government applauds the decision to fully integrate the secretariat of the New Partnership for Africa's Development — a programme dedicated to accelerating cooperation and development on the continent — into the African Union's structure and budget.

Canada sees the development of key African multilateral institutions, such as the African Union (AU), the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa and the African Development Bank, as vehicles to help achieve an enabling environment for stability and socio-economic development. Canada also strongly supports the African Peer Review Mechanism as an important initiative, vital to the overall success of Africa's development.

At the same time, Canada has maintained a strong commitment to regional and multilateral initiatives to advance global malaria prevention and control efforts. Last month, Prime Minister Harper of Canada announced that with our contribution of $540 million to the Global Fund, Canada's contribution to date will rise to more than $1.5 billion.

Canada has long been engaged with our African counterparts in finding durable solutions to protracted conflicts across the continent, both through direct bilateral contacts and through engagement in support for continental and regional African institutions such as the AU and the Economic Community of West African States. These organizations are increasingly demonstrating clear leadership and capacity to address the current peace and security challenges on the continent, as well as to prevent future violent conflicts and political crises.

In the Sudan, the ongoing conflict and resulting humanitarian crisis in Darfur continue to be of concern. Delays in the preparations for the two referendums mandated by the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) on the future status of South Sudan and the Abyei region are reaching a critical stage. In order to maintain peace and stability, a range of post-referendum issues also need to be negotiated.

Since 2006, Canada has contributed over $800 million in support of peace and humanitarian objectives in the Sudan, including support for CPA implementation and the Darfur peace process. Canada's support has included partnering with African countries that contribute personnel to the Sudan's two Security Council-mandated peacekeeping missions.

(*spoke in French*)

In the Great Lakes region, Canada continues to play a strong leadership role as co-Chair with the European Union of the group of special envoys and friends to the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region to support regional solutions to the complex development and peace and security challenges in the region. In that regard, there has been much progress in the past year between countries in the Great Lakes region and international partners towards advancing a regional certification mechanism for minerals, which are driving the conflict in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo and destabilizing the region.

In the context of support for stability in the Great Lakes region, Canada has provided over $124 million for humanitarian and development assistance to the Democratic Republic of the Congo since 2006. Canada is also contributing to peace and security in the Democratic Republic of the Congo through active diplomatic engagement, support to the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo by deploying up to 12 Canadian forces personnel, who occupy key positions, and by annually committing $4 million for the period 2010-2013.

Canada continues to support efforts to bring stability and provide humanitarian assistance to Somalia. Canada participates in the International Contact Group on Somalia and has provided more than $72 million in humanitarian assistance since December 2006 to help respond to the urgent needs of Somalis and Somali refugees in Kenya.

In conclusion, Africa has achieved much success over the past few years. Canada joins our African partners in acknowledging that progress. The African continent is an area of great promise and substantial potential. Through coordinated African-led commitments and partnerships, this potential must be realized.

Mr. Sumi (Japan): It is my great pleasure and honour to address the Assembly today to discuss the important agenda items relating to African development.

African development is today one of the most urgent priorities for the world and for the United Nations. In May 2008, we heard the voices of Africa's leaders at the fourth Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD IV), co-organized by the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the World Bank and Japan. It is now time for us to report to the Assembly on how we have responded to those voices. At TICAD IV, Japan pledged, first, to double its official development assistance to Africa, secondly, to proactively and flexibly provide up to $4 billion in soft loans and, thirdly, to work to double Japanese private investment in Africa over the next five years.

In implementing those commitments, the Government of Japan established a TICAD follow-up mechanism as a framework for monitoring the implementation of the Yokohama Action Plan. After the

first TICAD ministerial follow-up meeting in Botswana in March 2009, a second ministerial meeting was held in Tanzania in May 2010, with participants from 65 countries. At that meeting, Japan pledged to step up its Millennium Development Goals-related assistance by appropriating approximately $1 billion, beginning this year, until the next TICAD ministerial follow-up meeting. The Government of Japan also promised to make even greater use of official development assistance (ODA) loans for infrastructure projects, namely, up to $2 billion in the next two years.

Japanese ODA to Africa covers a wide range of sectors, including infrastructure, agriculture, trade and investment, community development, health, education, water, the consolidation of peace and good governance and combating climate change. These areas correspond to the key sectoral priorities of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and reflect the genuine needs of Africa.

For example, food security in Africa is an important issue. On the occasion of TICAD IV, the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) launched an initiative known as the Coalition for African Rice Development, in partnership with the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa, in order to support the efforts of African countries to increase rice production. Japan entrusted $100 million to the World Bank through two Japanese trust funds to support rice-producing organizations and the African Rice Development Initiative. Twenty-three African countries have already benefited from these activities.

Also, as part of TICAD joint-partner efforts to increase irrigated land area in Africa by 20 per cent by 2013, Japan intends to construct and improve irrigation facilities and increase the irrigation capacity of African countries by over 100,000 hectares. By the end of March 2010, commitments had already been made to cover 30,000 hectares. JICA, the World Bank, the African Development Bank and other financial institutions are collaborating in that regard.

Furthermore, Japan has supported the NEPAD-Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development African investment initiative, which aims to improve African capacity to strengthen the investment environment for growth and development. Since 2005, Japan has provided a total of €0.9 million to that initiative. Along with South Africa, we have co-chaired the initiative's steering group to facilitate region-wide dialogue on investment policy.

Climate change is one of the most pressing issues in Africa. In 2008, Japan contributed $92 million to the African adaptation programme implemented by UNDP. The programme mainly focuses on building effective leadership, institutional frameworks and national and regional capacity to cope with natural hazards associated with climate change, as well as on renewable energy as a mitigation measure. The necessary resources have been allocated to 20 African countries, with projects already in place in all those countries.

In promoting cooperation between Africa and Japan, we fully respect local leadership, ownership and partnership, in keeping with NEPAD core principles and values. We regard these principles as essential to the promotion of sustainable development in Africa. In order to ensure that the desired accelerated growth will benefit and empower individuals and communities and not aggravate social and economic disparities, the concept of human security needs to be taken into consideration, in particular in implementing the policy measures aimed at achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

Japan recognizes the increasingly important role played by the African Union in the field of development, as demonstrated by the integration of NEPAD into its structures and processes. Also, Japan welcomes the Commission of the African Union as a new co-organizer of TICAD.

Since its inception, the TICAD process has attached great importance to South-South Cooperation, which has now been adopted by a wide range of TICAD partners. For example, as a form of triangular cooperation, JICA launched its Asia-Africa Knowledge Co-Creation Programme in 2005. This subprogramme, which focuses on total quality management for better hospital services, was launched in 2007 by TICAD IV as one of its flagship programmes in order to respond to the challenges faced by the African region, including the chronic shortage of financial, logistic and human resources. Sri Lanka plays a vital role in the Programme by introducing its experience in hospital management. A total of 15 African countries currently benefit from the Programme.

Let me now touch upon the Roll Back Malaria campaign. Last month at the United Nations High-level

Plenary Meeting on the Millennium Development Goals, the international community renewed its commitment to achieve the Goals by 2015. At the meeting, Prime Minister Naoto Kan announced Japan's promises, including $5 billion in assistance over the next five years in the area of health, where progress is particularly slow. Furthermore, to demonstrate to the international community an ideal way of providing assistance in the field of maternal and child health, Japan has proposed an assistance model called EMBRACE — which stands for Ensure Mothers and Babies Regular Access to Care. Malaria prevention and control is an essential part of implementing the EMBRACE model, to ensure that more children's lives are saved.

In the field of tackling malaria, the Global Fund has played an outstanding role and achieved excellent results, as evidenced by its having saved the lives of 5.7 million people. Many of these lives have been saved through the provision of 122 million long-lasting insecticide-treated nets, including the Olyset net developed by a Japanese company.

At the Global Fund's third Voluntary Replenishment and Pledging Conference, held here in New York on 5 October, the Government of Japan pledged to make contributions to the Global Fund in the coming years amounting to $800 million, starting in 2011. As one of its founders and as a major donor, Japan will further reinforce its efforts to deliver the necessary assistance to people in need and to promote human security through the Global Fund. Under our global health policy, Japan will aim to enhance the complementarity of its bilateral assistance and the programmes supported by the Global Fund and other multilateral organizations, thereby increasing synergy.

In conclusion, my delegation would like to reaffirm Japan's long-term commitments and contributions to the development of Africa as a continent of hope and opportunity.

Mr. António (Mozambique): I wish to reiterate the commitment expressed during the general debate by the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Mozambique to render all our support to you, Mr. President, in the successful discharge of your noble duties.

My delegation aligns itself with the statements made by the representative of Yemen on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and by the representative of Malawi on behalf of the Group of African States.

It is with great interest that my delegation participates in this joint debate on issues of fundamental importance for Africa. I would like to focus Mozambique's contribution on one agenda item, namely, "2001-2010: Decade to Roll Back Malaria in Developing Countries, Particularly in Africa". In that regard, I wish to commend the Director-General of the World Health Organization for the report before us today on the progress made to achieve the goals for the Decade (see A/65/210).

We note with encouragement that the report gives evidence of the positive trends generated by the Decade to Roll Back Malaria as a result of giving this disease high priority on the international health agenda and mobilizing the much-needed political, technical and financial support for the various efforts to control and eliminate the disease, where possible, and to ensure adequate investment in research leading to its eradication.

Indeed, amid challenges posed by the inability of high-burden countries to adequately provide universal coverage, the report indicates that the initiative has been widely publicized and currently enjoys pledged financial support amounting to $1 billion per year in the form of grants and loans, which will allow for intensive and wide-scale implementation of malaria control activities.

We believe that these achievements were possible due to four central factors: first, the emphasis placed on malaria control instead of eradication; secondly, the focus on sub Saharan Africa, one of the major risk areas; thirdly, the global partnership between development agencies, banks, the private sector, non-governmental organizations, foundations and a network of researchers; and, fourthly, the promotion of local capacities and health systems so that malaria can be dealt with locally.

As we strive to keep the momentum generated by the Decade to Roll Back Malaria, we should seize the opportunity created by the High-level Meeting on the Millennium Development Goals to further the successful interventions made so far towards universal coverage. To this end, there is a pressing need for information about the efficacy and the cost-effectiveness of different interventions, so as to lead

policymakers to better use the available resources and obtain the maximum possible social benefits.

At this juncture, I would like to highlight some of the achievements of Mozambique's national malaria control programme in addressing the question of mortality due to malaria in the course of the Decade.

Available data indicate that Mozambique is not yet positioned to achieve pre-elimination status. Therefore, our Government's five-year plan and its poverty eradication strategy envisage bold measures to strategically develop national systems and capacities in the health sector and to increase the coverage and quality of interventions that can allow the country to move to pre elimination status sooner rather than later.

As in many malaria risk developing countries, in Mozambique the disease has shown to have not only detrimental health effects but also adverse consequences for economic and social development. For example, approximately 99 per cent of the population lives in areas at risk of malaria, and the country is prone to natural disasters that can contribute to dramatic increases in malaria transmission.

Malaria accounts for a high percentage of Mozambique's disease burden, with children under five, pregnant women, socially disadvantaged groups and people living with HIV/AIDS being the most vulnerable. In addition, the risk is higher in rural areas than in urban areas. Malaria is also responsible for up to 44 per cent of all outpatient consultations and 57 per cent of paediatric admissions and is a leading cause of low birth weight in newborns. Apart from its direct impact on health, malaria imposes an enormous socio-economic burden on local communities and the country as a whole, especially for the poorest segments of the population.

Nevertheless, in the past three years, the country has experienced a reduction in malaria mortality rates, including in patient cases and deaths. Our experience indicates that the combination of four major control methods — vector control with indoor residual spraying, the distribution of conventional mosquito nets, disease management and emergency and epidemic preparedness and response — is more effective and has produced a rapid decline in malaria morbidity and mortality.

Similarly, the combination of indoor residual spraying, intermittent preventive treatment and artemisinin-based combination therapy seems to have played an important role in achieving the present level of malaria control in Mozambique. As a result, Mozambique has taken significant steps in reducing the burden of malaria by more than 75 per cent in reported cases since 2006, with a decrease in the number of deaths of more than 40 per cent in the same period.

Our approach to malaria control includes interventions in the Southern Africa region, as malaria does not recognize national borders. In this context, indoor residual spraying in the provinces of Maputo and Gaza has benefited from the regional approach through support from the Lubombo Spatial Development Initiative, a tri country collaborative initiative to fight malaria in the region spanning Mozambique, South Africa and Swaziland. We believe that through regional collaboration, and not only focusing on diagnosis and treatment but also expanding vector-control operations, extensive progress will be made in controlling malaria.

As indicated in the report before us, national leadership and sound strategic measures, coupled with international political will and adequate financial resources, can increase the coverage of malaria interventions and reduce the socio economic burden that the disease represents to the development of our countries. We believe that only intensive malaria control efforts will help African countries reduce child mortality by two thirds by 2015, as envisaged in the Millennium Development Goals. Therefore, a much larger infusion of resources than those currently available is needed to make headway in the fight to roll back malaria. We therefore seize this opportunity to appeal to our partners to keep their financial commitments in support of interventions to roll back malaria.

The challenges before us in addressing the weak health and data collection systems, poor infrastructure, lack of human resources and international funding require that we redouble our efforts to reduce by half the deaths due to malaria in Africa and to halt the disease and begin to reverse its incidence by 2015.

I would like to conclude by stressing that, based on the progress made so far and the commitments adhered to by various partners, we are confident that universal access will soon be a reality and that together we can beat malaria. The Government of Mozambique

remains committed to accelerating and redoubling its efforts to control this scourge.

Mr. Daoud (Sudan) (*spoke in Arabic*): My country's delegation would first like to congratulate Mr. Deiss on his election as President of the General Assembly at its sixty-fifth session. We trust that under his wise and able leadership the Assembly will achieve important accomplishments. My country's delegation would also like to express its support for his efforts and pledges its cooperation with him in ensuring the success of this session.

We also wish to associate ourselves with the statement delivered by the representative of brotherly Yemen on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, and the statement delivered by the representative of Malawi on behalf of the Group of African States.

Africa has achieved great progress since the launch of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), a partnership that expresses the commitment and determination of the States of Africa to put the continent on the path of economic and social growth by taking control of their own development.

Today, as we have crossed the halfway point towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2015, Africa is still the only continent suffering from obstacles on its path to the full elimination of poverty and need. Therefore, more concerted effort by the international community is needed to implement the global partnership for development and to effectively fulfil development obligations without delay.

Meeting Africa's development needs, evaluating the status of implementation of various obligations, overcoming challenges and determining the way forward are all part of enhancing the global partnership for development in Africa. The political declaration on Africa's development needs (resolution 63/1) reaffirmed the commitment by the heads of State and Government, ministers and representatives of States Members of the United Nations to address Africa's special needs as contained in the Millennium Declaration (resolution 55/2), the United Nations Declaration on the New Partnership for Africa's Development (resolution 57/2), the Monterrey Consensus of the International Conference on Financing for Development, the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, and the 2005 World Summit Outcome (resolution 60/1).

The role of regional organizations in peacebuilding in Africa is important for the achievement of sustainable peace, especially in post-conflict States. In this forum, we call for the full implementation of the 10 year plan to build African peacekeeping capacity and enhance the regional consultative process in order to ensure effective support for the African Union and its programmes pertaining to NEPAD.

Despite some progress, the current framework for servicing the debt of low-income countries is insufficient. There is a need to expand the scope of the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Debt Initiative and the Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative. Also, African countries need to be able to overcome the challenges that prevent them from attaining their HIPC completion points.

Creating a peaceful environment is a prerequisite for economic and social development. The Sudan has a distinguished role in sustaining peace. Arrangements for sharing wealth are among the main elements of the three peace agreements. The fact that the Sudan has joined the African Peer Review Mechanism has paved the way towards government bodies implementing the Mechanism, with a role given to interested civil society and private sector actors. We have also set up a programme within this framework to empower women, spread democracy, raise accountability and enhance the rule of law.

Half of the world's population suffers from malaria or the risk of malaria. More than 3.3 billion people have been affected by the disease, which killed almost a million in 2008. Most of the Sudan's population is threatened by malaria, and over 7 million persons a year are infected, of whom 35,000 die.

Scientific studies indicate that the negative impact of climate change has increased the rate of infection. High temperatures help increase the lifespan of mosquitoes that carry the disease, which directly affects economic and social development in the country. Therefore the Sudan has drawn up a national strategy to combat malaria and has created a specialized unit to fight the disease. It focuses on strengthening means of managing the spread of the disease and on intensifying monitoring operations.

That approach has helped us to develop effective tools and methods for prevention and treatment.

The international economic slowdown, the rise in the prices of foodstuffs and climate change all limit the achievement of tangible progress in implementing NEPAD and in combating the spread of malaria. Thus they threaten our ability to achieve the MDGs by 2015. African countries and development partners must show determination and clear leadership in order to achieve real reform in the areas of debt relief and the international trade system. Such reform should facilitate the membership of developing countries in the World Trade Organization and increase the amount of official development assistance. In addition, to achieve the Goals by the set date, that assistance must be strengthened and aligned with national ownership and the development programmes and plans of developing countries, because development is a collective responsibility and must be achieved through equitable international partnership.

Mr. Sipangule (Zambia): The Zambian delegation has the honour to address the Assembly on the agenda item entitled "2001-2010: Decade to Roll Back Malaria in Developing Countries, Particularly in Africa". Zambia notes with appreciation the report of the World Health Organization on the item, contained in document A/65/210, which my delegation has found very useful.

My delegation also aligns itself with the statement delivered by the delegate of Malawi, the current Chair of the African Union, on behalf of the African Group.

Zambia, as Chair of the Roll Back Malaria Board, wishes to reiterate that, while we recognize that some countries have almost eliminated malaria from their list of public health challenges, it is still a major public health concern in others. The burden of malaria is highest among children under five years of age, pregnant women and the vulnerable in society. In addition to its direct health impact, malaria causes severe social and economic burdens on individuals, households and indeed communities at large. Thus in Zambia, malaria control has been prioritized in the basic health-care package, the National Health Strategic Plans and the National Malaria Strategic Plan.

The Zambian Government strongly believes that every Zambian has a fundamental right to access to effective malaria control, preventive and curative treatments and care. The Government also ensures those services are delivered as close to the home as possible. The Government and its cooperating partners have established institutional structures and strategies to ensure universal coverage.

The Zambian Government has put in place malaria prevention interventions that include, inter alia, indoor residual spraying, long-lasting insecticide-treated nets and intermittent preventive treatment for pregnant women. The curative interventions are enshrined in prompt and effective case management activities, which focus primarily on providing care for those who are suffering from malaria.

In order to improve malaria treatment, in 2004 the Zambian Government revised its malaria treatment policy by switching from the use of chloroquine as the first-line treatment to the more efficacious artemisinin combination therapy. The drug of choice is artemether-lumefantrine, which is available free of charge in all public health facilities throughout the country.

Zambia has achieved remarkable reductions in the incidence of malaria over the recent past, and that has been attributed to the integrated approach in malaria control activities. As indicated in the above-mentioned report of the World Health Organization, the use of bednets in Zambia has reduced the number of malaria cases by 50 per cent over the past decade.

However, Zambia is committed to cooperating with the World Health Organization and other cooperating partners in efforts to further reduce the incidence of malaria. In that regard, I wish to take this opportunity to inform the Assembly that Zambia will be convening an international meeting of the Roll Back Malaria Partnership Board from 6 to 8 December in Lusaka, the Zambian capital, at which participants will learn from each other's experiences in the last decade. It is my delegation's hope that the Roll Back Malaria partnerships and other cooperating partners will attend that important meeting.

Despite the remarkable progress in controlling malaria in Zambia, a number of challenges still remain. They include late disbursement of committed funds, particularly by our cooperating partners, low utilization rates for insecticide-treated nets and inadequate human resources. We therefore call upon the international community, particularly our cooperating partners, to continue to extend assistance to the Roll Back Malaria

programme and also to our countries in the fight against this number-one killer disease, malaria.

Mr. Shin Boonam (Republic of Korea): African development is a key to the promotion of peace and prosperity in the world. The political, economic and social development of Africa is an important task for the international community as a whole. The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) well represents our collective vision and holistic approach to African development.

As the world leaders agreed during the High-level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), Africa's slow and uneven progress towards achievement of the MDGs, further hindered by the recent multiple crises, requires greater attention from the world. To meet the target deadline of achieving the MDGs by 2015, the international community needs to be more involved in providing assistance to the continent. In that regard we must recognize that official development assistance has been an essential tool in meeting African development needs. Recent challenges should not impede the galvanizing of joint efforts.

We are fully aware of the need to ensure adequate resources and to implement our promises. The Republic of Korea is fully implementing its commitment to double its official development assistance to Africa by 2012, compared to 2008, as it declared on the occasion of the second Korea-Africa Forum.

We would like to highlight the idea that development cooperation with Africa should start with the identification of countries' specific needs and conditions. There is no "one size fits all" model for development cooperation.

The Republic of Korea has strived to gain a deeper understanding of Africa's specific demands and priorities and to come up with feasible means to meet those needs by making full use of channels of dialogue such as the Korea-Africa Forum and the Korea-Africa Economic Cooperation Conference. Those events have served as useful opportunities to enhance mutually beneficial partnerships in sectors such as education, agricultural and rural development and information and telecommunication technologies.

As a country that in recent history successfully transformed itself from recipient to donor country, we have focused in particular on sharing our development experiences. In that regard, the Korean Government has delivered on its commitment to increase to 5,000 the number of participants from Africa — including public officials, researchers and engineers — who take part in our training programmes. We have also increased to over 1,000 the number of World Friends Korea volunteers in African partner countries over the next two years. We believe that that will contribute to bolstering Africa's economic and social development by fostering quality human resources.

A large number of populations in Africa still remain vulnerable to a wide range of health issues, including HIV/AIDS and malaria. The mobilization of resources is crucial in responding to those challenges. The Republic of Korea, which is a pioneer country in the introduction of innovative financing for development, such as the air-ticket solidarity levy, has allocated a significant portion of revenue to fighting those diseases through funding for UNITAID, the International Drug Purchase Facility, and GAVI, the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization.

Integrating African countries into the multilateral trading system is critical to achieving their sustainable development. In that regard, the Republic of Korea believes that the successful conclusion of the Doha Round will promote development in Africa and, consequently, the growth of global trade. We fully recognize the importance of ensuring that least developed countries (LDCs) in Africa have duty-free and quota-free market access. We are guaranteeing the access of LDCs' products to the Korean market.

As the Chair of the Group of 20 (G-20) Summit this year, the Republic of Korea will invite two African countries — Malawi, as Chair of the African Union, and Ethiopia, as Chair of NEPAD — to the Summit to be held next month in Seoul. For the first time at a G-20 Summit, the development issue will be discussed as an integral agenda item in the G-20 process. A multi year action plan on eight development pillars will be adopted at the Seoul Summit.

Africa has significant potential as a future driving force of global economic growth. The assistance of the international community is indispensable for the realization of the continent's development potential. It is in our common interest to support Africa's efforts to achieve sustainable development through an enhanced development partnership.

As the saying goes, good company on the road is a shortcut. The Republic of Korea will be good company along the road to African development.

Mr. Feleke (Ethiopia): Allow me at the outset to express my delegation's appreciation to the President for convening this plenary meeting, which is of great importance for developing countries and for Africa in particular. I would also like to express our deep appreciation to the Secretary-General for his leadership and commitment to putting Africa's agenda at the forefront of the work of the United Nations system.

My delegation fully associates itself with the statements delivered this morning on the agenda items under consideration by the representative of Yemen, on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, and by the representative of Malawi, on behalf of the African Group.

Ethiopia also welcomes the reports of the Secretary-General (A/65/152, A/65/165 and A/65/167) under agenda items 62 and 12.

As the Secretary-General has indicated in one report (A/65/152), Africa's leadership and political will, social progress, sustained economic growth and governance reforms are slowly changing perceptions of the continent in today's world and that at the same time, the impact of violent conflicts and poverty in Africa should not be underestimated. It is also worth mentioning that the report highlights that progress has been recorded in the implementation of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), in moving forward the African Peer Review Mechanism and in increasing official development assistance to Africa.

We are also of the view that the integration of the newly established NEPAD Planning and Coordinating Agency into the African Union Commission structure and process has generated new momentum in the implementation of NEPAD priority areas.

NEPAD, as a programme of the African Union, is an integral socio economic development framework for Africa. African countries are therefore collectively and individually implementing the sector-specific strategic priority areas identified within NEPAD, such as those of agriculture, infrastructure, good governance, investment, health and education. African countries have also committed themselves to achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by, among other things, allocating 10 per cent of their budgets to agriculture, 15 per cent to health and 20 per cent to education.

The African Union has also committed itself to good governance through the adoption of several instruments, including the African Peer Review Mechanism. The Mechanism is a self-monitoring instrument with a mandate to encourage participating States to ensure that their policies and practices conform to the agreed political, economic and corporate governance values, codes and standards, as well as to achieve mutually agreed objectives on the socio economic track, as set out in the Declaration on Democracy, Political, Economic and Corporate Governance. So far, 30 countries have become members of the Mechanism.

In keeping with the provisions of NEPAD, the international community has also committed itself to moving forward the vision of NEPAD, as indicated in the report of the Secretary-General. However, much remains to be done if Africa is to extricate itself from the problems it faces and assume its rightful place in the international community. We share the Secretary-General's view that firm determination and leadership are required on the part of us Africans and international development partners alike, so that it is possible to achieve the goals that NEPAD has envisaged. Indeed, if Africa is meaningfully supported in achieving sustainable development, we can move from managing chronic poverty to helping Africa achieve durable economic growth and social development.

When it considered Africa's development needs in the General Assembly two years ago, the international community declared (resolution 63/1) that it was concerned that Africa's share of international trade was only 2 per cent. It also underlined the important role that trade played in promoting economic growth. It also asserted that the high-level meeting represented a unique opportunity to strengthen global leadership and partnership for development in Africa, which is pivotal to bringing Africa into the mainstream of the global economy.

It is our hope and expectation that the current round of trade negotiations of the World Trade Organization (WTO) will be concluded with a successful development-oriented outcome, as initially conceived. In particular, while we appreciate the market-access initiatives in favour of Africa by

Member States, we would like to remind the international community that, if the global partnership for Africa is to be strengthened and, indeed, if the continent is to integrate in and fully benefit from the globalizing economy, then the various trade-related provisions put forward by Africa should be included in the WTO agreement.

It is exactly 10 years since the international community agreed and expressed its determination to tackle the impact of malaria in developing countries, particularly in Africa. Over the years, a broad range of national and international actions have been taken to alleviate the suffering of those afflicted by this disease.

In that regard, my delegation welcomes with appreciation the report of the World Health Organization (WHO) on the Decade to Roll Back Malaria (A/65/210, annex). Ethiopia is of the view that the recommendations in that report, if duly implemented, would further enhance our efforts to control malaria, particularly in priority countries. As the report indicates, the achievement by high-burden African countries of high coverage of their populations with bednets and treatment programmes is encouraging progress towards meeting MDG 4 — reducing mortality rates of children under five by two thirds by 2015.

Notwithstanding the concerted efforts of developing countries and their partners, malaria continues to be the major cause of morbidity and mortality on our continent. As we know, malaria affects the most productive part of a society and impedes a nation's socio-economic development. It is no wonder that the nations that are hard hit by malaria are the least prosperous. The malaria epidemic is one of the deadliest diseases in Africa. Its impact on socio-economic development is still significant, in spite of the considerable political attention and financial support it has been given at the international level. Of the half billion people in the world vulnerable to malaria, the majority live in sub-Saharan Africa.

Malaria is one of the major public health problems in Ethiopia. Approximately 68 per cent of the population lives in malaria-prone areas, and 75 per cent of the country's land mass is malaria-infested. Cognizant of the impact of the malaria epidemic on the socio-economic development of the country, Ethiopia has long made its malaria prevention and control programme a priority in the social health sector. The 2006-2010 national strategic plan, among others, was aimed at rapidly scaling up malaria control intervention to achieve a 50 per cent reduction in the disease within the timeline.

The major achievements of that scaled-up effort have been free distribution of 20 million insecticide-treated bednets, provision of rapid diagnostic tests and artemisinin-based combination therapies at peripheral health facilities, development of district epidemic-preparedness plans, and deployment of 30,000 health extension workers for delivery of health-care services at the community level. Deaths have thus declined substantially, falling by 35 per cent since 1980. The effective scaling up of malaria prevention and treatment has also resulted in dramatic declines in outpatient malaria cases and malaria-related deaths among children in malaria-endemic zones around the country. Recently, Ethiopia was successful in its application for a five-year Global Fund Round.

Maintaining the achievements made so far and producing a significant impact by reducing malaria's overall burden by 50 per cent, thus paving the way towards meeting MDG 4, is heavily dependent on the availability of financial and human resources. Ethiopia is boosting local efforts by stepping up its grass-roots awareness programme on prevention of the disease, but the support of the international community is necessary in order to build on and sustain the progress.

It should be emphasized that both financial and technical resources have contributed to Ethiopia's coverage and access to prevention, treatment and support services. The partnership has also helped strengthen the country's health-care system in general, including aspects such as monitoring and evaluation, and procurement and supply management.

Ethiopia is fully implementing the five main malaria prevention and control strategies recommended by WHO. Since malaria is an ecology-related disease, in Ethiopia the health extension programme has brought coverage to all parts of the country.

Mr. Jaber (Lebanon): My delegation thanks the President for organizing today's meeting on the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), and the Decade to Roll Back Malaria, which concludes at the end of this year. We also thank the Secretary-General for his comprehensive reports (A/65/152, A/65/165 and A/65/167) and notes (A/65/62, A/62/Add.1 and A/65/210) on these items.

Lebanon associates itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Yemen on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, in particular its support for the establishment of a monitoring mechanism to follow up on all commitments related to Africa's development under the General Assembly's auspices.

Our meeting comes not only after the conclusion of the High-level Plenary Meeting on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which recognized that more attention should be given to Africa, but also after the second Afro-Arab Summit held in Sirte last week, jointly organized by the African Union Commission and the League of Arab States. The Summit highlighted the strong bond between African and Arab countries and formulated a partnership strategy between the two regions in the areas of peace and security, investment promotion and trade, agriculture and food security, and social and cultural cooperation.

The Afro-Arab Partnership Strategy is an example of the international support inspired by NEPAD. NEPAD was adopted in 2001 by African leaders with the aim of eradicating poverty, promoting sustainable growth and development, and empowering women through genuine partnerships at the country, regional and global levels. The African ownership and leadership of NEPAD have led to significant progress in all areas essential to Africa's development, such as infrastructure, agriculture and food security, health, education and training, environment and tourism, information and communications technologies, and science and technology.

Lebanon enjoys long-standing close ties with the African continent. Many African countries have been home to many Lebanese, and those friendly countries will remain their home for many years yet to come. My delegation fully supports the objectives of the Afro-Arab Partnership Strategy aimed at realizing durable peace and security in the two regions, promoting investment and trade between African and Arab countries and continuing the joint efforts to achieve the MDGs by 2015.

Lebanon believes that closing the MDG gap will only be possible if the international community steps up its support for Africa's development and reverses the negative impact the ongoing economic and financial crisis has had on African countries. In particular, my delegation wishes to highlight the importance of fulfilling official development assistance commitments, continuing the granting of debt relief, restoring and increasing foreign direct investment and expanding access to global markets for African exports.

History tells us that development cannot be sustained and countries cannot flourish if conflict and instability persist. In that regard, we welcome the specific commitments expressed by the African Union to ensure peace and stability on the continent as demonstrated by its recent expanded engagement in Somalia and the Sudan. That commitment is further strengthened by the work of the Panel of the Wise and the Continental Early Warning System. The International Conference on the Great Lakes Region and the mediation initiatives carried out by the Economic Community of West African States and the East African Community are further examples of strong regional efforts to ensure an environment conducive to sustainable development.

Nonetheless, challenges persist. Although the number of inter-State conflicts has declined, conflicts over natural resources, such as timber and minerals, desertification and declining pastures, droughts and scant water resources, continue to stifle Africa's development potential. Achieving the MDGs and sustainable economic growth is therefore a security imperative. The protection of civilians in situations of armed conflict, in particular women and children, should thus continue to be given special attention by peacekeeping missions in order to safeguard Africa's greatest resource, namely, its human capital.

Lebanon notes with grave concern the high toll malaria continues to exact on Africa's human capital, in particular its children. As of 2008 85 per cent of malaria cases worldwide were in Africa, threatening the lives of over 200 million people. We therefore welcome the launch of the African Leaders Malaria Alliance last year and the recent increased pledges to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, and we urge donors to honour their commitments in this regard.

Rolling back malaria and continuing the fight against HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis, which continue to plague the continent, are necessary for achieving the health-related MDGs. Without healthy children, women and men and unless extreme poverty is eradicated, achieving universal primary education and

enabling vibrant and productive societies will not be possible.

Mr. Seruhere (United Republic of Tanzania): I want to thank the President of the Assembly for convening this joint debate on the New Partnership for Africa's Development and the 2001-2010 Decade to Roll Back Malaria in Developing Countries, Particularly in Africa.

Tanzania aligns itself with the statements presented by the representative of Malawi on behalf of the African Group and by the representative of Yemen on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

Tanzania welcomes the report of the World Health Organization entitled "2001-2010: Decade to Roll Back Malaria in Developing Countries, Particularly in Africa" (A/65/210), which highlights the progress made in meeting the goals concerning malaria control to be achieved by 2010 under General Assembly resolution 62/180. We acknowledge the progress that has been made in some parts of Africa, including in part of my country, the island of Zanzibar, in reversing the malaria epidemic through political engagement and sustainable national malaria control programmes. Zanzibar has achieved a success rate of over 99 per cent. We call for the continued engagement of the international community and other stakeholders to accelerate further gains achieved in malaria control and elimination.

Malaria is among the biggest health challenges to Africa. An estimated 74 per cent of the continent's inhabitants live in endemic malarial areas and about 95 per cent of the global 2 to 3 million deaths attributed to malaria occur in Africa. Malaria is a major killer of children in Africa, where 24 per cent of all deaths of children under age five are from malaria and malaria-related illnesses.

Malaria is a major economic burden in Africa, where it accounts for 30 to 40 per cent of outpatient visits and 10 to 15 per cent of all disease admissions in hospitals, private clinics and health-care systems. Malaria accounts for as much as 40 per cent of health-care spending in endemic African countries. Malaria costs the continent $12 billion a year, and consequently malaria has slowed economic growth by up to 1.3 per cent per year through death and lost hours of economic productivity, as well as expended public funds and lost family income. Malaria is thus said to be a disease of poverty and a cause of poverty.

Such statistics are a cause of great concern to Africa and the world at large. We recognize that malaria-related ill health and deaths throughout the world can be substantially reduced with political commitment and commensurate resources, increased public awareness and sensitization about malaria prevention and availability of proper health services, particularly in malaria-endemic countries. Yet each year, we allow nearly 1 million deaths to occur, when those deaths could have been prevented with the universal application of existing tools at our disposal.

In early 2008, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon appointed a Special Envoy for Malaria to mobilize global support for action on the disease. Following the Secretary-General's call for universal coverage and in response to a growing international push for a long-term commitment to malaria control, the malaria community collectively developed the Global Malaria Action Plan. The objectives of the Plan are to accelerate and sustain malaria control efforts, eliminating the disease where possible, and to ensure investment in research aimed at creating new tools that would permit the eradication of the disease in the long term.

My delegation would like to congratulate the Secretary-General, His Excellency Ban Ki-moon, for his leadership, dedication and commitment to the work of the Organization and for the new momentum he is bringing to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). We welcome his Global Strategy for Women's and Children's Health and urge the international community to provide the support necessary for its implementation.

Once again Tanzania would like to emphasize the importance of national leadership and global partnerships for meeting the MDGs. Tanzania will do its part. We call upon partners to do their part, as stipulated under MDG 8.

One such partnership that is proving successful is the collective efforts of African leaders through the African Leaders Malaria Alliance, chaired by His Excellency Jakaya Mrisho Kikwete, President of the United Republic of Tanzania. Our focus within the Alliance is to ensure that we attain the 2010 targets for universal coverage of appropriate malaria prevention, diagnosis and treatment interventions. We are confident that, if the requested support is realized, we can attain this target. It is for this reason that we ask for the full

and timely replenishment of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria.

All of these efforts are enshrined in the NEPAD blueprint. We therefore call on the international community to render its support in meeting the objectives of NEPAD.

We also commend the partnership and support from our friends in the international community aimed at combating malaria. Those efforts complement the efforts of the Secretary-General.

Malaria in Africa can be eliminated in our lifetime. We have the tools to make that happen. What is required now is the enhanced political will of the international community. Let us not only roll back malaria but eliminate it in its entirety. We pledge our part.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the Observer of the Holy See.

Archbishop Chullikatt (Holy See): As the General Assembly considers the ongoing development of Africa, my delegation takes this opportunity to affirm once again the need for the countries of Africa, jointly and with the support of the international community, to effect the eradication of poverty, to place African countries on the path towards sustainable growth and development, and to halt the marginalization of Africa in the globalization process.

Addressing the special needs of Africa requires partnerships in all areas of society. Those partnerships help to foster greater solidarity and promote more sustainable development throughout the continent. In that regard, the recent decline in the global economy has created new challenges for Africa, as foreign direct investments in the region have fallen by 36 per cent since 2008. The burden of increasing debt also threatens future sustainability and undermines the improvements that have been achieved in recent years.

We know that one of the many factors upon which all of this depends is the health of the African people. As the New Partnership for Africa's Development programme rightly points out, the health and well-being of the African people will help bring about the achievement of poverty reduction and sustainable development in Africa.

In that regard, my delegation is grateful for the recent report entitled "2001-2010: Decade to Roll Back Malaria in Developing Countries, Particularly in Africa" (A/65/210), and is pleased to see that such progress has been made over the past decade in malaria control efforts. Certainly this is due, in part, to the considerable commitment at the international, regional and country levels.

In particular, my delegation is grateful for the recent initiative of the African Leaders Malaria Alliance, in which African heads of State and Government have come together in order to promote universal provision of malaria-control interventions. We are heartened by the commitment of the members of the Alliance to work together to translate their commitment into greater efforts to eradicate this disease.

Malaria takes the lives of nearly 1 million people each year, almost 90 per cent of whom reside in Africa, with the worst affected areas being in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Kenya, Nigeria and Tanzania. Approximately 3.3 billion people worldwide remain at risk of malaria, resulting in 250 million cases each year, 86 per cent of which occur in Africa.

Malaria most devastatingly affects children under the age of five. Many who survive an episode of severe malaria suffer learning impairments or brain damage. Pregnant women and their unborn children are also particularly vulnerable to malaria, which, during pregnancy, is a major cause of mortality, low birth weight and maternal anaemia.

It goes without saying that our focus must remain on treatment, prevention and research. Proper diagnosis is available, and infected individuals can make a full recovery, if provided with the means to do so. Appropriate treatment should be accessible to those who are affected, and individuals must be able to receive affordable, safe and, where necessary, free diagnostic testing and drugs.

We know how reduction in the transmission of malaria is achieved and, in that regard, it is important to recall the Abuja Declaration to Roll Back Malaria in Africa, which calls for the development of mechanisms to facilitate the provision of reliable information on malaria to decision-makers at the household, community, district and national levels, enabling them to make use of appropriate control and surveillance strategies.

Resources must continue to be allocated to ongoing research into developing safe and cost-efficient vaccines, as well as medicines to treat those who are infected.

My delegation takes this opportunity to highlight the work of numerous individuals in Catholic health-care services working on the front lines in countries in Africa to assist those suffering from malaria. The selfless service of those individuals as well as so many others demonstrates their commitment to the well-being of the human family, especially those who are suffering.

These organizations not only provide the resources and technical skills necessary to assist those affected by malaria but have also worked to foster greater development throughout Africa. Working in the fields of education, infrastructure and health-care programmes, often in the poorest and most vulnerable communities, those organizations are vital partners in the long-term development of Africa.

The Acting President: In accordance with General Assembly resolution 49/2 of 19 October 1994, I now call on the observer for the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

Mr. Jilani (International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies): Despite the many successes in combating malaria, that killer disease continues to take the lives of nearly 1 million people every year, mostly children under the age of five; and, as we all know, malaria is a disease that is 100 per cent preventable and treatable.

We have seen that countries that have achieved high coverage of their population with mosquito nets, as well as improved access to effective diagnostics and treatment, have made enormous progress in the fight against malaria. Countries such as Eritrea, Rwanda, Zambia, Tanzania and Sao Tome and Principe have seen reductions in malaria cases and deaths by up to 50 per cent, demonstrating that the targets of the Millennium Development Goals can be achieved.

The malaria programmes implemented by national Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies have focused on scaling up network ownership and ensuring that net distribution is accompanied by extensive and prolonged community education and empowerment efforts. In various affected countries, it has been shown that combining net distribution with follow-on "hang up" campaigns, carried out by Red Cross/Red Crescent-trained volunteers in the community, significantly reduces the incidence of malaria.

Combining distribution with follow-on support and training is especially crucial when trying to reach the most vulnerable groups, such as those living in remote areas, refugees and people affected by stigma and discrimination. Trained Red Cross and Red Crescent volunteers who live in the very same community and speak the local language are ideally placed to help families overcome any social or cultural barriers that may prevent the effective hanging and use of nets.

Since 2002, as a direct result of the net distribution carried out by the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, more than 300,000 malaria deaths have been averted, while 18.2 million people have been protected against malaria.

Furthermore, in a recently published report on a pilot project involving an innovative approach to malaria treatment, it was shown that the community approach works. The pilot project "Beyond prevention: home management of malaria in Kenya" showed that, even in the most remote areas, providing free, effective medicines to trained local volunteers can alleviate both the malaria disease burden and the strain on the health system. The malaria home management project in Kenya reaffirms earlier studies that trained community workers can safely distribute and administer malaria treatment.

The key message of the Red Cross and the Red Crescent Societies is that communities must own the activities that support the prevention and treatment of malaria at the individual and household levels. To increase ownership and action, families must have the support necessary to understand the transmission of malaria and how it can be prevented through the use of nets and treated by accessing effective treatment at the first signs of danger.

In 2009 alone, the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies reached 3.7 million households, or 14.8 million individuals, through community-based activities to prevent malaria and to ensure that care providers are aware of the danger signs of malaria and the need to immediately access effective treatment.

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies will further step up its efforts

by developing more "hang up" campaigns, by covering more affected countries and by teaming up with partners to accelerate the delivery of nets to all malaria-endemic areas.

Additionally, the Federation also includes a malaria component in its emergency response activities when disasters take place in malaria-endemic areas or where epidemics are possible as a result of a natural disaster.

The Acting President: In accordance with General Assembly resolution 64/122 of 16 December 2009, I now call on the observer for the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria.

Ms. Lwin (Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria): When the world leaders came together to sign the United Nations Millennium Declaration in 2000 (resolution 55/2), dying from a mosquito bite was a reality in large parts of Africa, Asia and Latin America. A decade later, one area of development that is inspiring hope is our progress in the fight against malaria to the point that one day soon it could really be eliminated as a public health problem in most malaria-endemic countries. If countries continue to scale up their progress at the pace set in recent in health care, we will see tremendous progress.

The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria is proud to be a major international funder of malaria programmes, with more than $5 billion committed in 82 countries to date. The Global Fund has invested particularly in the universal coverage of insecticide-treated mosquito nets and had distributed 104 million bednets by the end of 2009. We estimate that currently available funds will enable us to purchase approximately 250 million bednets, a significant step forward in addressing the estimated need for the most vulnerable populations.

Global Fund grants have also supported the indoor residual spraying of insecticides in more than 19 million sites and have treated 108 million cases of malaria, in accordance with national treatment guidelines.

Global Fund financing is having a substantial impact on malaria morbidity and mortality worldwide, with an increasing number of countries reporting a reduction in malaria deaths of more than 50 per cent. Malaria control interventions also have an important impact in reinforcing health systems. Hospital beds are being freed up, children are remaining in schools, workers are staying at work and women are delivering healthier babies, reminding us of the close linkages among the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

That progress is due to excellent political leadership in countries affected by malaria and increased technical support from partners, such as the World Health Organization and the Roll Back Malaria Partnership. In no other area of development has there been such rapid and direct correlation between available resources and the impact in fighting malaria at the country level.

I am delighted to report that, earlier this month, donors from the public and private sectors made a financial commitment of $11.7 billion to the Global Fund for the years 2011 to 2013. That contribution is the largest ever financial pledge for the collective international effort to fight the three pandemics of AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria.

At a time when so many Governments are tightening their belts at home, such commitments send a powerful message that health is integral to sustainable development. We cannot be complacent on the heels of our success so far. If we are truly going to eliminate malaria as a public health threat in endemic countries, we must maintain the pressure on all fronts in the coming years by renewing nets, ensuring availability of drugs and supporting effective malaria interventions. The Global Fund will be ready to support those activities through our continuing effort to seek the additional resources needed to fight malaria.

On behalf of the Global Fund, let me conclude with simple but sincere thanks to all Members for their collaboration and commitment to the fight against malaria and to global health. Because of their efforts, achieving the MDGs for malaria is not some elusive dream, but something that is actually within reach in many countries.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this issue.

The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 62 and its sub-items (a) and (b), and of agenda item 12.

The meeting rose at 5.30 p.m.

United Nations A/65/PV.32

General Assembly

Sixty-fifth session

Official Records

32nd plenary meeting
Monday, 18 October 2010, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Deiss ..... (Switzerland)

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Agenda item 11

Sport for peace and development

(a) Report of the Secretary-General (A/65/270)

(b) Draft resolution (A/65/L.4)

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Tunisia to introduce draft resolution A/65/L.4.

Mr. Jomaa (Tunisia) (*spoke in French*): First, I would like to express my delegation's satisfaction with the Secretary-General's report entitled "Sport for development and peace: strengthening the partnerships" (A/65/270). We welcome the actions undertaken by the United Nations system, especially the Office of Sport for Development and Peace.

I would also like to stress how much my delegation values the continuing and unstinting efforts of Mr. Wilfried Lemke, the Secretary-General's Special Adviser on Sport for Development and Peace. We particularly applaud his activities in Côte d'Ivoire in cooperation with the United Nations Operation in that country and the role he has played on behalf of the United Nations vis-à-vis the authorities of that friendly country, to which a Tunisian contingent has been sent as part of the United Nations peacekeeping forces there. We wish Mr. Lemke every success in his noble endeavour and assure him of our full support for his efforts to ensure the success of programmes aimed at promoting sport around the world. Tunisia, which supported the original idea of the International Year for Sport and Physical Education in 2005 (resolution 58/5), remains determined to continue its efforts to make sport, through its ability to promote communication and rapprochement, become a driving force for integrating development, at both the national and the international levels, and a means of promoting solidarity, tolerance and cultural and human diversity.

Today, sport is part and parcel of the United Nations and an effective tool that should be borne in mind as we consider the issues confronting this Organization, as was pointed out during the consultations on the Outcome Document (resolution 65/1) of the Summit on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), whose paragraph 67 deals with the role that sport can play in facilitating the implementation of the MDGs.

We thank the Secretary-General for formulating the Action Plan in his report to the sixty-first session (A/61/373), and we welcome the fact that that has been continued in the current report, with proposed improvements and adjustments that will undoubtedly only strengthen the effectiveness of sport as a tool for promoting peace, development, education and health.

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate South Africa on its successful holding of the last World Cup, and Singapore on the success of the first Youth Olympics. Those events clearly demonstrated the unifying nature of sport and the enthusiasm it can generate for friendship and solidarity among athletes and fans, irrespective of their origins,

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loyalties and beliefs. Given sport's noble nature and the vital contribution it can make to the emergence of younger generations in good physical and mental health, Tunisia takes this opportunity to call on Member States to take all necessary measures to confront the dangers of doping, which threatens both the health of athletes and the image and credibility of sporting events. We welcome the growing number of Member States that have signed the International Convention against Doping in Sport, which is the first global instrument in the fight against that scourge, adopted at the thirty-third session of the UNESCO General Conference in 2005.

Based on our interest in continuing that momentum and making sport a means of promoting universal principles in the service of future generations, I have the honour to introduce draft resolution A/65/L.4 entitled "Sport as a means to promote education, health, development and peace", on behalf of Monaco, Tunisia, the members of the Group of Friends of Sport for Development and Peace and on behalf of the other sponsors, whose names are listed in the document.

I would like to point out that, since the publication of that document, the following Member States have joined the list of sponsors, namely, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Canada, Central African Republic, Croatia, Cyprus, Finland, Lithuania, Montenegro, Poland, Portugal, San Marino, Spain, Thailand and Zambia.

The draft resolution is the outcome of consultations, both with a large number of Member States and with United Nations bodies, to whom we extend our sincere thanks and gratitude for the interest accorded to the draft text.

The draft resolution encourages all stakeholders to cooperate with the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General in order to make more widely known the importance of including sport in development programmes, while calling on Member States to appoint focal points responsible for sport for development and peace and to establish innovative partnerships with the United Nations Office on Sport for Development and Peace.

Here, I would like to express the hope that the draft resolution will enjoy the support of all General Assembly Member States, which would send a strong message to all those acting in the name of the noble practice of sport and provide great encouragement to all athletes.

Mr. Quintães (Brazil): At the very outset, the Brazilian delegation would like to welcome draft resolution A/65/L.4, submitted by the delegations of Monaco and Tunisia and entitled "Sports as a means to promote education, health, development and peace". That effort seems to be in close harmony with the main initiatives and programmes undertaken by Member States and international organizations to promote that objective in an integrated manner that is consistent with accomplishments in other social fields.

The practice of sports is deeply rooted in Brazilian society. Accordingly, sport in Brazil is traditionally regarded as instrumental in forging good standards of citizenship, thereby playing a very special role in maintaining a healthy social fabric. Furthermore, it cannot be overstressed that access to sport constitutes a fundamental social right that is enshrined in our Constitution.

In that regard, the Brazilian Government firmly believes in the potential of sport as an important factor in social inclusiveness and development, as well as a tool for fostering role model values and a solid upbringing for our children and youth.

Our Government's policy is to consider sport as part of a broader context that also encompasses the fields of education and health. We believe that dealing with sport in a socially integrated and holistic way promotes peace and development.

That view stems from the collective awareness that sport alone is not capable of solving complex social and economic challenges and that it cannot, by itself, ensure peace and mutual cooperation. Bearing that in mind, the Brazilian Government has adopted a series of public policies focused on promoting citizenship, education and health through sports.

Thus, several governmental initiatives are been launched in Brazil with a focus on multi-stakeholder partnerships with representative institutions in our society. For instance, we have started a programme that employs over 12,000 inmates from State prisons to manufacture sports equipment, whose output is then used in other educational sports programmes carried out by the Brazilian Government.

The so-called Second Half programme fosters, in turn, sports activities for children and youngsters

enrolled in public schools, and it already has more than 1 million participants. Likewise, pursuant to the recommendations of draft resolution A/65/L.4, Brazil is currently developing international sports cooperation projects in partnership with other developing countries, namely, Benin, Botswana, Kenya, Palestine, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia. We remain open not only to increasing and expanding the scope of such programmes with other countries, but also to launching initiatives in cooperation with United Nations agencies and programmes.

We feel that an exciting sports-centred decade has just begun. Over the next six years, Brazil will host three mega-sporting events: the fifth World Military Games in 2011, the World Cup of the Fédération internationale de football association in 2014, and the Olympic and Paralympic Games in 2016. During this decade, sports will be at the top of the Brazilian social, political and economic agenda.

The decision to host those mega-events is very much consistent with the priority accorded to the promotion of sustainable development and social inclusiveness. Hence, the Brazilian Government remains committed to fostering and adopting public policies, convinced that hosting such events will help generate more jobs and improve our national infrastructure and increase opportunities for Brazilian youth.

Brazil also hopes that those mega-events will provide an opportunity for us to share experience in promoting sports as a means to achieve social inclusiveness and to enhance the development of partnerships with other nations, especially developing countries.

For all those reasons, it is with the utmost satisfaction that Brazil renews its support for and sponsorship of the draft resolution on sport as a means to promote education, health, development and peace.

Mrs. Aitimova (Kazakhstan): At the outset, on behalf of the Republic of Kazakhstan, I wish to express our warm appreciation to Mr. Wilfried Lemke, Special Adviser to the Secretary-General of the United Nations on Sport for Development and Peace, and his Office for their record of commendable activities over the past year.

My Government would also like to convey special gratitude to the Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, as the driving force behind that thrust, for his report entitled "Sport for development and peace: strengthening the partnerships" (A/65/270). The report presents a comprehensive overview of how sport has been used to achieve development and peace at the national, regional and international levels. It also highlights the innovative use of sport in carrying forward the messages of the United Nations at major global games and sporting events, such as during the 2010 World Cup of the Fédération internationale de football (FIFA) in South Africa.

That was the first FIFA championship hosted on the African continent, indeed in a developing country, which gave momentum to the political, socio-economic and development goals of the region through the convening power of sports. In addition, the Secretary-General's appeal to all Member States to adhere to the Olympic Truce, called for in the universally accepted resolution 64/4, has been effective in upholding peace, security and human dignity, as demonstrated during the XXI Olympic Winter Games and the X Paralympic Winter Games, in Vancouver, Canada, in February and March 2010.

The Action Plan on Sport for Development and Peace should be an integral component of all national and international policies and agendas aimed at promoting peace and development. My country would therefore like to underscore the decisive role of the Sport for Development and Peace International Working Group in providing consultations and technical assistance to Member States with a view to making sport a vehicle for advancing national measures for security, human rights, equality and the betterment of humankind.

Kazakhstan took special steps to align itself with the work of the United Nations by developing a large-scale programme of physical training and sports throughout the country, accessible to all age groups and levels of the population, for the period from 2007 to 2011. The 2008 national legislation makes it obligatory for the Government to create sports facilities and infrastructure, provide training for national teams and protect the legal right of each citizen to have equal access to those possibilities.

Kazakhstan has already set in place a complex goal-oriented agenda and programme for the athletes competing in the XXX Olympic Summer Games in London in 2012. Furthermore, Kazakhstan will host the seventh Asian Winter Games, Asiada 2011, and intensive projects are under way to ensure that the stated objectives and targets are reached in time. The

programme will comprise 11 different types of sport and 69 sets of tournaments, with an estimated total of 10,000 accredited participants and approximately 1,400 athletes.

The Ministry of Tourism and Sport of the Republic of Kazakhstan, together with leading world architects, has developed a massive project for constructing numerous sports stadiums, arenas and related facilities of the highest standards in quality, meeting international norms of durability and safety. Currently, some 80 per cent of construction work is under way, and it is anticipated that all facilities in Astana will be completed by 25 October 2010 and in Almaty by the end of this year. Asiada 2011 will be the first Winter Games of the continent, and my Government is striving to make them a memorable event for the region. The preliminarily expenditure for constructing facilities and for other preparations is to the tune of $1 billion.

Kazakhstan strictly complies with the regulations of the International Convention against Doping in Sport and has ratified it. We would especially like to stress the effectiveness of the use of sport as a tool for development and peace, as demonstrated during the XXI Olympic Winter Games in Vancouver. Kazakhstan will continue to do its utmost towards that objective in its national and regional activities and also at the international level.

Inspired by the ideals of the Paralympic Games, Kazakhstan, like all other countries, pays increasing attention to sports for the personal development and rehabilitation of persons with disabilities by creating the optimal conditions for their participation. I am pleased to report that Kazakhstan will soon ratify the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its Optional Protocol.

Kazakhstan also undertakes measures for enhancing excellence in professional and competitive sports and, at the same time, developing leisure sporting activities for the wider community with varied interests. The focus is also on using sport for physical fitness and inculcating the values of a healthy lifestyle in the population. Legislation has been adopted to support the effective creation and functioning of sport-oriented non-governmental organizations to partner with the Government to promote education, physical and mental health and well-being.

A very significant advantage of sport is its effectiveness in inspiring youth with the positive ideals of national and community service, as well as promoting the values of equity, tolerance, respect for rules, fair play, hard work, healthy competition and good character. Kazakhstan focuses on all those elements.

My delegation considers that the accelerated dynamism and outreach seen in United Nations efforts to integrate sport for development and peace, under the leadership of the Secretary-General, are most encouraging. We call for the further engagement of all stakeholders — Governments, parliamentarians, religious leaders, academia, the business sector, media, civil society and especially youth groups — to work for this new vision of sport. Through collective multilateral action, sport can become one of the most powerful means to accelerate the achievement of broader development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals.

Sport is only a means, yet an important one, to strengthen our collective multilateral enterprise in combating climate change, drugs and illicit trafficking in all forms and in promoting environmental conservation and sustainable development, human rights and gender equality, as well as interreligious and cultural dialogue, to mention a few issues, through raising awareness and mobilizing action on them. We need to fully seize this moment to utilize sport in propelling action to support the United Nations, as well as the individual efforts of Member States for their agendas of development and peace.

Mr. Benítez Versón (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): The San Francisco Charter established the bases of a new system of international relations, conceived to avoid repetition of the terrible consequences of the two world wars of the twentieth century. The main purpose, inscribed in the first paragraph of the Charter, is to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war and to create a democratic and equitable international order based on respect for the dignity of all human beings equally.

More than six decades after the creation of the United Nations, the vast majority of the world suffers the consequences of the profoundly unjust and unsustainable prevailing international order. We are witness to a sad economic and social panorama, characterized by the combination of the economic and financial crisis, the food and energy crisis and the

negative impact of climate change, which endangers the human species.

Now more than ever, it is our duty to promote a peaceful international environment through solidarity, cooperation and multilateralism.

Sport constitutes a significant aspect of development at both the national and the international levels. Sport strengthens solidarity and friendship among peoples as essential elements in the promotion of peace, development and cooperation among nations.

Since the triumph of the Cuban revolution in 1959, sport in our country has not been an exclusive pastime and became a right for all our people. As a result, Cuba has achieved significant success in regional and international sport competitions.

We have fostered a pedagogical system that includes physical education as an integral part of all stages of training the human being. We work to provide sport training for our children from an early age. Likewise, we oppose athletic activities that have money as their only reward. We also denounce the talent drain in sports, which developing countries are victims of. Cuba has suffered the consequences of that unacceptable practice.

For years, the Cuban sports movement, led by the Cuban Olympic Committee and the National Institute of Sports, Physical Education and Recreation has selflessly collaborated with various countries of the South. We have sent to those countries technicians, professors and trainers who in a modest way teach new sport training methods, thus contributing to improving sport results and people's participation in sport and developing bonds of brotherhood and friendship between peoples.

Likewise, we have strengthened international cooperation by making our Institute of Sports Medicine and the National Anti-doping Laboratory available to other countries, with the purpose of contributing to the fight against the scourge of drugs, which corrupt athletes and impede fair play.

Cuba created the International School of Physical Education and Sport, dedicated to training professionals from different countries. Its central value is solidarity.

The countries of the South also deserve to host the Olympic Games, which are a forum for brotherhood and solidarity. We are certain that the 2016 Olympics Games, in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, will be a success for the entire South.

If we promote international solidarity, including through the Olympic ideal, all the weapons created by this civilization will be rendered superfluous. Let us promote and sow peace and development through sport, and we will have a better world.

Mr. Al Mujaini (Oman) (*spoke in Arabic*): Allow me at the outset, Mr. President, to congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of the Assembly at its sixty-fifth session. I wish you every success in your task so that we can achieve our desired objectives.

Sport is an important means of strengthening social cohesion and the ideals of peace, brotherhood, solidarity, justice, non-violence and tolerance. It facilitates the resolution of problems in post-crisis times. Sport can bring people together and serve as a forum for development, peace and social development. It is a recognized means of reinforcing peace among various countries of the world. It transcends borders and social classes and plays an important role in social integration and economic development in the political, cultural and geographical fields.

The participation of youth in sport is an important element for achieving peace and development in the world, not to mention its cultural and intellectual contributions to different issues. It enables youth to be uniquely creative in developing their societies. In reinforcing their participation in sport, we must provide youth with the necessary means and resources for them to achieve their vision of and aspiration to a prosperous homeland. That will help them build their capacities and skills so that they can be positively integrated in society and achieve the objectives of peace and development and so that they can spread their vision and goals and increase their chances of creative participation within their societies.

The General Assembly recognized this in resolutions 58/5, 59/10, 60/9 and in its proclamation of 2005 as the International Year for Sport and Physical Education, seeking to encourage sport as a means of promoting education, health, development and peace. Also, the 2005 World Summit Outcome (resolution 60/1) states that sport could foster peace and development.

Sport and physical education could provide opportunities for solidarity and cooperation that would foster tolerance and a culture of peace and equality between genders. It can also provide for the needs of disabled persons, achieve dialogue among civilizations and foster social cohesion and concord.

We need a joint framework within the United Nations to encourage sport as a means to reinforce education, health, development and peace. To that end, we must expand the mandate of the Group of Friends of Sport for Development and Peace, along with the United Nations communications team that would set up a practical approach, strategies, policies and common programmes in order to increase awareness and cooperative action within the United Nations and with other partners from outside the Organization.

The Government of my country, under the sponsorship of His Excellency the Sultan of Oman, provides to Omani citizens every means to carry out their tasks in the fields of development and construction, especially since the young of both sexes constitute the largest percentage of our society. In 2004, we established a Ministry of Sport that prepares youth in the field of sport and that cooperates with other Government bodies all over the country. That enhances sport in Oman in many domains and helps to utilize the potential of youth and their ability to communicate with other friendly and sisterly countries.

Our Ministry, on the basis of that noble objective, has a vision of establishing a sports system that ensures optimal use of technical, human and material resources in the field of competitive sport and sport for all. The Ministry also seeks to send a clear message that promises quality sport services and facilities through the activation of good organization, communications, marketing and building partnerships with relevant institutions.

As we seek to strengthen relations among various peoples, we will host the second Asian Beach Games in December 2010, to be sponsored by the Olympic Council of Asia. It will include many sports activities with a large number of Asian countries participating in various capacities.

Ms. Fulp (United States of America): The United States delegation supports promoting the use of sport to advance peace and development. My delegation appreciates the potential of sport to contribute to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. Sport can foster development and peace, can build an atmosphere of tolerance and understanding, and can serve as a tool for education. Well-planned sporting programmes promote cooperation, solidarity, social inclusion and health among all of those engaged.

Throughout history, sport has played an important role in the social, political and economic lives of peoples and nations. Sport is a shared cultural passion that can bring people together across the divisions of region, race and religion. One of the great things about sport is that it reminds us of what humanity has in common — not what may drive us apart.

The United States recognizes the value of sport in that way and has created an office called SportsUnited within the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs at the Department of State. It is dedicated to international sport programming designed to work at the grass-roots level. Its purpose it to aid foreign youth in discovering how success in athletics can be translated into the development of life skills and achievement in the classroom. SportsUnited provides for those foreign youth exposure to American life and culture. It also provides American youth interacting with them the opportunity to learn about foreign cultures and the challenges young people from other countries face today.

Since 2002, the Department of State has funded and organized sports programmes in more than 80 countries in all regions of the world. Those programmes have featured activities in over 25 sports and areas such as disability sports, managing sports centres, recreational sports and sports management.

There is so much from the world of sport to imagine and apply towards improving lives together, whether across oceans, in neighbourhoods or in our homes. For example, First Lady Michelle Obama's 2010 "Let's Move!" campaign against childhood obesity is making a difference in the lives of children and families. It encourages physical activity for youth and is improving the quality and availability of physical education in schools. And we are proud to note that "Let's Move!" is based on an exemplary partnership between the public and private sectors that has underpinned its success.

Sport has the power to bring us together and to build stronger societies. One critically important way that our societies improve is through integrating

women and girls fully, and sport has proven powerful in that regard.

Recently, United States Permanent Representative Susan Rice was recognized by the Women's National Basketball Association with its Inspiration Award. Having been an athlete in school, she reminded the gathering:

> "Our daughters need role models who can inspire them to play to the best of their abilities, to compete to the limits of their strength, and to win on their own terms ... Sports are just simply too important to be left to the boys. Determination and drive are habits girls must learn early on and use for a lifetime. These really are the fundamentals — the skills I learned on the court — long before I ever sat at a negotiating table."

Another way that sport contributes to our society is its inherent lesson of fair play. Perhaps the biggest threat to that is the destructive practice of doping in sport. I am pleased to note, in that regard, that in 2008 the United States signed an instrument of ratification on the International Convention against Doping in Sport, at the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization. That ratification demonstrated our long-standing commitment to the development of international anti-doping controls and our promise to apply and facilitate the application of appropriate anti-doping controls during competitions held in the United States.

My delegation appreciates the report of the Secretary-General for today's debate (A/65/270). It updates us usefully on progress regarding Sport for Development and Peace, International Working Group policy recommendations, the functioning of the United Nations Office of Sport for Development and Peace, the Trust Fund for Sport for Development and Peace, and the Action Plan on Sport for Development and Peace.

Furthermore, the United States is pleased to offer its support for today's draft resolution, "Sport as a means to promote education, health, development and peace" (A/65/L.4), under agenda item 11, "Sport for peace and development".

Athletes and sports accomplishments provide powerful examples in our globalized society, more and more each year. As I have described, the United States has made sport part of its global outreach efforts for decades. That commitment goes all the way to the top. President Obama recently invited young Russian basketball players — boys and girls — to Washington on a SportsUnited sports visitor programme. He invited them to the White House court to shoot some hoops.

Diplomacy these days is not only about official meetings in conference rooms; it is also about people-to-people exchanges that break down barriers and build up goodwill. Sport truly is a global language. Sport teaches us how to work in teams. Sport builds discipline and confidence. Sport builds upon those values and strengths in our work here at the United Nations, promoting development and peace through sport.

Mr. Stone (Australia): Australia is committed to the principles of sport for development and peace and to the role the United Nations can play in furthering those principles. We welcome the report of the Secretary-General on this subject (A/65/270) introduced this morning and would like to take this opportunity to thank Mr. Wilfried Lemke, the Secretary-General's Special Adviser on Sport for Development and Peace, for his efforts.

We would also like to thank Tunisia for introducing the draft resolution (A/65/L.4) before us today, which Australia is pleased to co-sponsor.

We would also like to thank Switzerland, and in particular Ambassador Peter Maurer, for his role as co-Chair, along with Ambassador Jomaa of Tunisia, of the Group of Friends over recent years. We appreciate Monaco's taking over the co-chairship of the Group, and we look forward to working with Ambassadors Picco and Jomaa in strengthening the role of the Group of Friends.

A growing body of research on sport for development provides strong empirical evidence of the direct role that sport, as a component of international development programmes, plays in advancing human rights, social inclusion and community development. Apart from physical fitness and good health, sport contributes to the development of other life skills and attributes, including confidence, self-esteem, teamwork, cooperation, social interaction, interpersonal communication, tolerance and conflict resolution. Sport offers a way to improve the lives of the most marginalized and excluded children, including girls, children from poor communities, out-of-school and working children, and people with disabilities.

Because of that, sport remains an integral tool in Australia's development cooperation. Through the Australian Sports Outreach Programme, funding is provided in more than 40 countries for sport-for-development programmes at the grass-roots level. Working with local authorities and communities, Australia is able to increase the capacity of partners to plan and conduct quality sport-based activities that contribute to addressing locally identified development priorities.

In 2010, the sport-for-development programmes include a children's surf life-saving education programme in Viet Nam, increasing services to persons with disabilities through sport in Malawi, the establishment of youth clubs in post-conflict areas of Sri Lanka, a programme called Kicking AIDS Out, which uses sports analogies and games to convey messages about HIV and AIDS to young people in the Caribbean, and training players, coaches and administrators to promote active sports participation among rural women in Fiji.

Sport in Australia has always helped build the social cohesion that binds families, communities, regions and the nation. It brings together people of different nationalities, religions and cultures and helps promote tolerance and understanding.

Mr. Aisi (Papua New Guinea): Let me begin by applauding the numerous delegations, especially that of Tunisia, that have helped to promote human development through sport and physical education through the draft resolution that is before us today (A/65/L.4).

Sport and physical education play an increasingly important global role in maintaining national unity, health and cultural ties. The culture of sport provides a platform for social cohesion, value formation and national spirit. It is and can continue to be a way for different cultures to reach common ground, initiate dialogue and form relations.

Sport does bring individuals and communities together. For instance, the Olympic Games, apart from showing off athletes' incredible sporting abilities, contribute to intercultural ties that help bridge ethnic and cultural divides. Next year, the South Pacific Games will again bring together the best athletes of the Pacific islands to compete and participate in the spirit of sport. I should add here that we have just witnessed the successful completion of the Commonwealth Games in New Delhi. I congratulate the Indian Government and people on their successful hosting of the event. Such sporting events provide a stage to promote healthy forms of nationalism, spirit and unity among countries.

Promoting physical education is also a way to develop children's talents and abilities to their fullest potential. There is a growing risk of deteriorating physical education programmes within countries. The shrinking number of sports and physical education programmes limits the positive impact that sports can have in helping promote and maintain a child's physical and mental well-being. Physical education programmes within schools are essential and have been proven to enhance academic performance. Sports are a way for young individuals to express themselves as well as to play within a social community. They are a way to reduce disease, boost physical health and improve local development, and they provide alternatives to harmful activities such as drug abuse and crime.

We are aware of the dangers faced by sportsmen and sportswomen, as well as by young athletes, who encounter violence, doping, overtraining, deprivation and other threats. Such dangers emphasize the need to develop more effective ways to fight against doping and destructive processes around our young athletes.

We emphasize the importance of the international community in helping to provide funding and resources for sports-related institutions so that such institutions can effectively construct programmes that can help make sport and physical education available to everyone. The international community must work together to provide a code of good practices to continue to combat the dangers that young athletes face.

By collectively working towards contributing to sport and physical education, we can help strengthen sport infrastructures for use as a tool for health, education, and social and cultural development. We call upon the international community and international sports bodies to continue helping developing countries, least-developed countries and small island developing States to help build sport and physical education. And here let me acknowledge the presence of the representative of the International Olympic Committee, who will speak later on.

Sport and physical education may be used as a tool to further international goals, including those in the Millennium Development Goals. Sports provide a place to develop positive skills such as discipline, confidence and respect. We encourage the United Nations and participating members to find new and innovative ways to utilize sports as a source of communication and a way to reduce tension and generate dialogue.

Lastly, we call on the international community, including international sports bodies and sport-related organizations, to partner in the development of sport and physical education programmes. In doing so, we are also investing in global conflict-prevention and peacebuilding efforts.

Mr. Shanta Kumar (India): I am honoured and privileged to participate in today's discussion on sport for peace and development. Let me begin by thanking the Secretary-General for his report on the item under discussion (A/65/270).

Sports are an important element in building character. They not only teach people to be just and fair but also prepare them to face challenges in life. Sports, being a most popular activity for young people, can help to motivate young people, build teams, develop leadership, promote volunteering and educate, apart from ensuring fitness and healthy lifestyles. Sports also seek to promote peace, equality and friendship among all people and nations. In fact, it is hard to imagine a more powerful medium than sports to inspire and bring people together for a common purpose.

Swami Vivekananda, the great philosopher from India, when approached by a young man to explain the meaning of the Bhagavad Gita, is reported to have looked at his physique and advised him first to go play football. "Develop your body and mind", Swamiji told the young man, "and then you will be better fit to study and understand the Gita". Swamiji was clear that a healthy body and mind were fundamental in our quest for peace and sports — indeed, they play a critical role towards that end.

The intrinsic linkage between sports and games and the human quest for excellence has been recognized ever since the inception of human civilization. It reached its epitome in Ancient Greek civilization, which is the progenitor of the Olympic movement.

Sports, games and physical fitness are an integral component of India's civilization, as is evident from the existence of the highly evolved system of yoga and a vast range of highly developed indigenous games, including martial arts. After our independence, the integration of physical education and sports with formal education was emphasized in the first five-year plan itself. Our efforts have been focused on broad-basing sports and providing modern sports infrastructure. India adopted a national sports policy in 2001. We have also encouraged the autonomous functioning of national sports federations and are happy to see that today all sections of our society, including the media and the business sector, are actively involving themselves in the promotion of sports.

Sports are also a most effective tool to help achieve development objectives in the areas of health, education, HIV/AIDS prevention, child protection and child development. They help generate public awareness and inspire broad, inclusive and committed action in support of developmental agendas.

I am glad that there is substantial recognition of the value of sports to help achieve the Millennium Development Goals and that many sports personalities have associated themselves with the United Nations in creating public awareness and understanding of various issues that affect youth and society. In this context, I am of course particularly happy that our national cricket icon Sachin Tendulkar is a Goodwill Ambassador for the United Nations Environment Programme and that our former tennis champion Vijay Amritraj was a United Nations Messenger of Peace in 2001.

India was honoured to host the nineteenth Commonwealth Games, which have just concluded in Delhi. That two-week mega-event featured participation from 71 countries across the world and more than 7,000 athletes, who celebrated sporting excellence, human skill and endurance and, above all, courage and character. The Games upheld and renewed the essential spirit of peace, equality and friendship among all peoples and nations.

We congratulate all those countries that successfully organized large global and regional sporting events during the past year. We also wish every success to all those countries that will be holding sporting events in the coming months and years. We believe that such mega-sporting events will strengthen

the cherished ties of goodwill and understanding that unite us as one family.

Ms. Rulumeni (South Africa): It is an honour and privilege for South Africa to participate in this important debate on sport for development and peace. We thank the Secretary-General for his latest report on this issue, entitled, "Sport for development and peace: strengthening the partnerships" (A/65/270).

This debate comes just a few months after the 2010 Fédération internationale de football (FIFA) World Cup, hosted for the first time on African soil. Indeed, South Africa prides itself on having hosted a spectacular and memorable event that has once again underscored Africa's renewal. South Africa was the stage and Africa the theatre that further enhanced Africa's social cohesion. It was in reality an African World Cup.

In South Africa sport played a crucial role in the demise of the apartheid system and in the creation of a new society after 1994. The realization that sport can be used as a tool for reconstruction and development has been occasioned by the spirit of unity that prevailed during such events as the Rugby World Cup, the African Nations Cup, the Cricket World Cup and the recent Soccer World Cup. At the centre of South Africa's sport-related reconstruction and development initiatives was our icon, Nelson Mandela. At this point I am reminded of his words when he said,

> "Sport has the power to change the world, the power to inspire, the power to unite people in a way that little else can. Sport can create hope where there was once despair. It is an instrument for peace, even more powerful than Governments. It breaks down racial barriers. It laughs in the face of all kinds of discrimination."

As declared in the 2005 World Summit Outcome (resolution 60/1), sport has the potential to foster peace and development as well as to contribute to an atmosphere of tolerance and understanding. Sport has been recognized as a powerful tool in contributing to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). In that regard, we advocate for the prioritization of Africa in our collective efforts, through sport and other means, to achieve these important and achievable goals.

Before the beginning of the World Cup, President Jacob Zuma initiated the One Goal campaign, with a view to advancing efforts towards achieving education for all, which is the objective of MDG 2. South Africa views sport as an important part of education. This campaign is part of a range of national initiatives towards achieving universal access to education.

In resolution 64/5, the Assembly also acknowledged the role played by sport in Africa as an instrument for the promotion of unity, solidarity, peace and reconciliation, and the preventive campaigns against scourges, such as HIV/AIDS, affecting the youth of the continent. Although sport alone cannot prevent conflict or build peace, it can contribute to broad and more comprehensive efforts in a number of important ways.

The fact that the African Union declared "Building and sustaining peace through sport" as the theme for this year's Africa Day was a clear recognition of the role of sport in peace and development. Coincidentally, the African Union declared 2010 the Year of Peace and Security. As an active stakeholder in Africa's peacebuilding efforts, South Africa encourages the use of sport as a tool to foster peace and advance Africa's development agenda.

Since 1994, our Government has put in place a range of progressive legislation in its pursuit to empower women in sports. This has been inspired by the recognition that women have a crucial role to play in all aspects of societal development, including sport. Women's empowerment has been manifested by the increasing number of women in leadership positions in the area of sport. Equally important, we have enacted legislation to protect and advance the empowerment of persons with disabilities, thus providing them with the opportunity to participate in sport with minimal or no hindrance. As a direct response to the Secretary-General's call in his report contained in document A/61/373, South Africa is currently involved in legislative processes to infuse sport for development and peace into national legislation.

South Africa welcomes the Action Plan on Sport for Development and Peace. Accordingly, we will implement the Action Plan at the national level in line with internationally agreed standards. Our Government reiterates the need for collaboration between national and international partners, including the United Nations system, to advance the objectives of the Action Plan. We also welcome the efforts of the Sport for

Development and Peace International Working Group and look forward to its report.

We also look forward to the summary report of the activities around the 2010 FIFA World Cup, to be published later this year. South Africa supports the Assembly's adoption of the draft resolution entitled "Sport as a means to promote education, health, development and peace" (A/65/L.4), which we will also sponsor.

In conclusion, South Africa once again expresses its gratitude to the United Nations, especially the Office of Sport for Development and Peace, and to the wider international community for all of the support offered to us during the World Cup. We hope that this event has permanently changed the perceptions of many about Africa.

Ms. Picco (Monaco) (*spoke in French*): In the days just after the convening of the summit Meeting on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), my delegation can only welcome the recognition that Member States have given to sports. Indeed, by adopting the final document (resolution 65/1), the heads of State and Government confirmed the relevance of sport as a tool for education, development and peace that can promote cooperation, solidarity, tolerance, understanding, social inclusion and health at the local, national and international levels.

The Secretary-General's participation in the round table on the issue of sport as a development tool, organized on the sidelines of the summit, is further evidence of his commitment to promote the power of sport. This power has already helped to raise public awareness of the problems affecting us all today, such as HIV/AIDS, sexually communicable diseases, hunger and all forms of violence. The power of sport also lies in its ability to bring communities closer and to promote essential values such as fair play and discipline.

These important results are the culmination, on the one hand, of the resolute action of the Secretary-General's Special Adviser on Sport for Development and Peace, Mr. Wilfried Lemke, whom we thank for having implemented the Action Plan set out by the General Assembly. On the other hand, these achievements bear witness to our ability to work together and to the importance of partnerships.

While the contribution of sport and physical activities to improving health no longer requires proof, its impact on overall development should be taken into account to inform our policies. In the context of this session of the General Assembly marked by the strengthening of the role of women within the United Nations, sport has more than ever demonstrated its ability to promote women's empowerment. We very much hope that the victory of Ms. Dalma Rushdi Malhas, the first Saudi athlete to take part in the Youth Olympic Games and whose performance we commend, will inspire other young women to fully achieve their potential.

The Sport for Development and Peace International Working Group, now acting under the stewardship of the Special Adviser, has developed the issue of sport within the context of child and adolescent development and has pinpointed strategic priority areas, which we fully endorse.

The initiative "Make Your Peace", born at the XXI Winter Olympic Games and the X Paralympic Winter Games in Canada, brought the values of Olympism into homes, schools and workplaces. The implementation of the Olympic Truce at the Paralympic Games strengthened recognition of the rights of people with disabilities and contributed to social cohesion.

As my colleague from South Africa has just pointed out, the historic holding of the Fédération internationale de football World Cup in South Africa in June served to pay tribute to Africa. It was also an opportunity to highlight very important issues such as the fight against human trafficking, racism, HIV/AIDS and the promotion of sustainable development. In particular, it was an opportunity to highlight the United Nations Development Programme Sustainable Transport Project, which is being carried out in conjunction with the Global Environment Facility, as well as the South African campaign to green the World Cup.

But as the Special Adviser has often stressed, the organization of global events is not the only framework in which we should illustrate the effectiveness and benefits of sporting activities. He has also been able to convince us of the impact of simple initiatives at the grass-roots level, such as the construction of a football field for use by the local population of Bouaké, Côte d'Ivoire, which made it possible for them to better

accept the United Nations operation in that country and involved them and the young people in the peaceful development of their country.

During the Fédération internationale de football association World Cup, his Most Serene Highness Prince Albert II and Mr. Lemke, along with the Prime Minister of Western Cape Province Helen Zille and Capetown Mayor Dan Plato, inaugurated a community centre devoted to development in the municipality of Gugulethu that seeks to integrate disadvantaged youth in sporting activities. That programme should serve as a model to be developed in other African cities.

This unifying characteristic of sport was also seen in Haiti — where sport has afforded thousands of young people an opportunity to escape the difficulties of their daily lives — and is part of overall reconstruction efforts on behalf of populations stricken by natural disasters.

The Secretary-General's report (A/65/270) is eloquent with respect to the many initiatives undertaken by Member States and about the different fields in which sport may have an impact, from road safety to birth registration. For example, a joint programme between UNICEF, the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire and the International Olympic Committee uses football to raise awareness of the importance of obtaining civil registration. The report also highlights the crucial importance of partnerships involving Governments, the world of sports, civil society and regional cooperation efforts. The contribution of the International Olympic Committee to our work during this session was a clear example of this.

The Principality of Monaco will join this common endeavour, in keeping with the unreserved commitment of His Most Serene Highness Prince Albert II, the recipient last month of the United Nations prize for the Millennium Development Goals in recognition of his involvement in support of peace through sport.

My delegation, as co-Chair of the Group of Friends of Sport for Development and Peace, will also continue to make its contribution to the Office of the Special Adviser. As we succeed our Swiss colleagues in the co-chairmanship, we wish to pay tribute to them and express our warmest thanks for having established this informal mechanism within the United Nations. As His Most Serene Highness Prince Albert II has said, contributing to peace is the finest battle that sport can wage, and it is this battle that we must win together.

Mr. Solón (Plurinational State of Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): Allow me to begin my statement by highlighting the fact that for President Evo Morales Ayma sport is an essential tool for attaining the Millennium Development Goals, given the vital impact it has on integration, peace and health, and above all because it helps reduce crime and contributes to the fight against drugs.

President Morales, who usually travels with a football team accompanying him, makes sport an element of integration among peoples, making it possible to overcome hurdles that have often kept neighbouring countries and peoples apart, as has been the case in our region over the past few decades.

For us in Bolivia, sport has become the main mechanism for developing football fields and sport centres in a way that has never been done in previous years. Bolivia has invested in sport because we feel that it is the main mechanism for ensuring that young people can be kept away from crime and drug addiction, as well as for bolstering ties of solidarity and fraternity. Above all, sport makes it possible to overcome elements of discrimination and racism that still exist in society, specifically through the promotion of sport among young people without regard to gender, thus ensuring that there is greater equality between men and women.

For the Plurinational State of Bolivia, sport is a fundamental element for peace that makes it possible to overcome a great deal of the tension and a great number of the conflicts that often still exist. It is precisely through sport that it is possible to bring about a spirit of brotherhood and fraternity, hence the importance that we as a State and Government ascribe to sport as a driving force for peace and development; for we believe that a society that manages to achieve the goal of overcoming poverty and marginalization is also a society that above all promotes sport among its citizens. Promoting sport means promoting health. For us, therefore, it is also a paramount founding element of development.

We in Bolivia have decisively embarked upon an effort to show the world that sport at high altitudes in no way damages human health. Over the past few years, regrettably, we have been hostage to a number of actions vetoing high altitude sport, specifically in

qualifying games for the World Cup in stadiums like the one in the city of La Paz, which is at an altitude of more than 3,600 metres. We have spoken out against such discrimination. Our President himself, together with his football team, has demonstrated that playing above 6,000 metres, on a football field on Cerro Sajama, in no way affects health, and that everyone without exception must play without regard to the altitude, climate or weather conditions in which they may find themselves. Sport should not be subject to any sort of discrimination.

For the Plurinational State of Bolivia, it is vital to promote actions in support of sport in the fight against drug addiction and drug trafficking. We are firmly convinced that one of the great mechanisms for ensuring that young people are kept away from drug trafficking and drug addiction is through sport. We are therefore great advocates of a major campaign to promote sport in the fight against drugs.

Finally, Bolivia is resolutely committed to peace. We believe that nothing brings people together more closely than the practice of sport.

The President (*spoke in French*): I call on the observer of Palestine.

Mr. Hijazi (Palestine): I would like to begin by thanking the Secretary-General for his report (A/65/270) and by commending the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Sport for Development and Peace. We also commend the crucial role of the Sport for Development and Peace International Working Group in shaping the global framework of sport for peace and development, as well as other actors for their support for this important work.

Palestine believes that the culture of sport is an immensely positive force for development in any society. In this regard, we fully agree with the UNESCO characterization of sport as a fundamental right for all. Harnessing the positive energy inherent in sport — which demands respect for the human values of respect for all, including opponents, non-violence, teamwork, acceptance of rules and fairness — makes sport a valuable asset in any nation's efforts towards development and peaceful coexistence. Sport is also an engine of economic development and social integration, which are crucial elements of overall development.

Palestine has invested much sincere effort and energy in this area, for we believe in the positive potential and the as yet unexplored development dimension of sport. In the past three years, Palestinian sport has truly evolved from being a luxury of the few to an aspiration within reach of all athletes regardless of social, economic or other difficulties.

In that short span of time, Palestine has developed and promoted women's teams in various sports. Those teams have competed locally and internationally, shifting women's participation in Palestine from a few exceptions to an acceptable and encouraged area of professional and personal opportunity. In that regard, we would like to express our sincere appreciation for the support extended to Palestinian sport by the international community, particularly by the United Arab Emirates, Qatar and Brazil. Their assistance has been invaluable and a subject of deep appreciation from Palestinian athletes and the Palestinian people.

Also during this period, Palestine has proudly hosted friendly and competitive games with international teams. These games were in fact a testament to the progress that Palestinian sport has achieved and a reflection of our belief in sport as an agent of development and peaceful relations between nations.

While we are profoundly proud of our achievements in sport thus far, we are also deeply troubled by the continuous difficulties our athletes and efforts confront from the occupying Power. Our progress has been slowed, and on some occasions disrupted, by the various obstacles and restrictions needlessly and punitively employed against our athletes and our efforts at development.

Israel, the occupying Power, continues to obstruct the right of Palestinian athletes to move and travel without hindrance. On several occasions, that punitive policy has prevented some of our star athletes from participating in important team practice games in the occupied Palestinian territory and abroad. The latest such occasion was 5 October, when the captain of the Palestinian team, who lives in Gaza, was banned from going to the West Bank for a match. Those restrictions also affect our ability to bring in sports equipment or to develop proper infrastructure, including stadiums.

Such punitive restrictions have moved officials of the Fédération internationale de football and the Union of European Football Associations to express their anger and grave concern at Israel's continued

obstruction of Palestinian athletes and sports development efforts. We commend those positions and call on all concerned to do their utmost to curb such practices and their negative effect on Palestinian efforts to develop sport in general.

Ms. Lucas (Luxembourg), Vice-President, took the Chair.

Development and occupation cannot possibly coexist. Any development effort, no matter how well planned and executed, is subject to the illogical and punitive whims of the occupation. Occupation is a negative force that shackles the occupied and inhibits them from fulfilling their potential and achieving their goals. However, in line with our commitment to the principles and fundamental values that sport represents, Palestine is determined to press ahead with its efforts to develop this field as an area of boundless potential for Palestine, its development and its national goal — peace.

We wish this important initiative every success in advancing the universal language, culture and values of sport. We also hope that, as part of its State-building efforts, Palestinian sport will continue to receive international support and be the subject of the world's fraternity.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): In accordance with resolution 64/3, of 19 October 2009, I now call on the Observer for the International Olympic Committee.

Mr. Sithole (International Olympic Committee): On behalf of the International Olympic Committee (IOC), I am pleased to support the adoption of draft resolution A/65/L.4, entitled "Sport as a means to promote education, health, development and peace", and to take part in this important discussion on ways to more effectively use the power of sport to promote development and peace. Allow me to acknowledge the invaluable contributions of the United Nations and the Secretary-General in elevating the role of sport as a tool for development and peace. His annual report (A/65/270), which has been just presented, is living proof of that.

In our capacity as Observer to the United Nations General Assembly, the IOC intends to further strengthen its ties and cooperation with the United Nations and to assist Member States and the United Nations Administration in their endeavours. Allow me also to thank Mr. Wilfred Lemke, Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Sport for Development and Peace, for the important part that he is playing in expanding the role of sport in United Nations human development and peacebuilding efforts.

The IOC's commitment to place sport at the service of humankind is enshrined in its founding document, the Olympic Charter. The Charter defines Olympism as a philosophy of life that seeks to place sport at the service of the harmonious development of humankind, with a view to promoting a peaceful society concerned with the preservation of human dignity.

The sporting movement translates that philosophy into actions in a variety of ways, starting, of course, with its premier event, the Olympic Games. The Games provide a global forum for peaceful competition and interaction in an atmosphere of fair play and mutual respect, showing by example that we can put aside our differences and find common ground. That ideal can be seen in some memorable moments, as exemplified by the actions of the young people who participated in the inaugural Youth Olympic Games in Singapore last month.

Much of the Olympic Movement's development work occurs far from the media spotlight. Last May, we opened a new youth Olympic development centre in Zambia. That innovative project combines sport with educational programmes, health services and community events. It is a good example of an effective multiparty partnership — in this case between the Government of the Republic of Zambia, the Zambian National Olympic Committee and international and national sports federations.

Many of our efforts are closely aligned with the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). For example, the promotion and empowerment of women in and through sport and gender equality are specifically addressed in the Olympic Charter. The IOC has steadily increased the participation and involvement of women in competitions and the organization of the Olympic Games. For the first time, women will participate in every sport on the Olympic programme at the Games in London in 2012.

The IOC formally acknowledged its obligation to environmental sustainability more than 15 years ago by adopting the environment as the third pillar of the

Olympic Movement, along with sport and culture. We work closely with the United Nations Environmental Programme to ensure that we live up to our responsibilities in that area. We work with UNESCO, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and other partners to provide value-based education to young people and sustenance to refugees. We work with the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, UNICEF, the World Health Organization and the Red Cross Movement to combat HIV and AIDS, malaria and non-communicable diseases.

In many of those initiatives, sport is a catalyst for action. It breaks down barriers between communities. It is a magnet for young people. It helps keep them in school and focused. It gives them mental strength and teaches them leadership skills. They learn the true meaning and value of teamwork and a team spirit.

Sport is not the answer to all the world's problems. It does not even have the leading role in addressing those problems. We look to the United Nations, Governments and specialized non-governmental organizations to take the lead in promoting development. The IOC salutes the efforts of Governments around the world to promote development, but we also urge them to embrace sport as a partner in those efforts and to give sport the attention, promotion and resources that it needs in order to effectively contribute to national development agendas.

The IOC acknowledges that real progress is possible with effective partnerships, as called for in MDG 8. The Secretary-General's report offers example after example, from countries around the world, of alliances that use sport in creative ways. The IOC and sport as a whole are doing their best, but more could be done with more consideration of sport as a factor in human development and peace and by factoring it into development agendas at every level.

However, we need comprehensive evaluation and monitoring of sport programmes for human development so that we can learn what works and what does not. We need more research and better monitoring tools, including widely accepted benchmarks and standards.

Sport is a powerful tool for development and peace. The challenge is to make the most of that tool. The International Olympic Committee stands ready to play its part. The IOC assures the Assembly that it will do its best to be its greatest partner.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this agenda item.

The General Assembly will now proceed to consider draft resolution A/65/L.4, entitled "Sport as a means to promote education, health, development and peace".

I should like to announce that, since the draft resolution was submitted, the following countries have become sponsors: Albania, Andorra, Cape Verde, Eritrea, France, Grenada, Haiti, Hungary, Jamaica, Kazakhstan, the Netherlands, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, the Republic of Moldova, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Serbia, South Africa and Togo.

May I take it that the General Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/65/L.4?

Draft resolution A/65/L.4 was adopted (resolution 65/4).

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 11?

It was so decided.

Agenda items 14 and 15

Global Agenda for Dialogue among Civilizations

Report of the Secretary-General (A/65/269)

Culture of peace

Report of the Secretary-General (A/65/269)

Note by the Secretary-General (A/65/299)

Mr. Habib (Lebanon) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to extend our sincere thanks to the President for organizing this important meeting. I would also like to thank the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report (A/65/269) on the activities related to the declaration of 2010 as the International Year for the Rapprochement of Cultures. That declaration was the logical result of the growing international awareness of the important need for a rapprochement of cultures through dialogue, which is an urgent issue of concern to us all. The meetings and symposia that we have seen take place this year are perhaps the best testament to the importance of diversity as a source of enrichment for humankind and, when exploited through constructive and innovative

dialogue, as a fountain of creativity, modernity, progress and advancement.

I come from Lebanon, an eastern country that has had a unique social and political experience and a nation that allows for dialogue and coexistence between religions and cultures that is an example of tolerance. Here I would like to recall the statement by the President of Lebanon when he spoke before the Assembly on 24 September. He affirmed that Lebanon will always remain open to dialogue and human and cultural interaction in a rich and creative manner, loyal to its main message, in spite of the challenges that it faces, in the promotion of a State of law and order and the values of democracy, freedom and harmony on which it is based.

This year, in accordance with our openness to dialogue, we joined the Group of Friends of the Alliance of Civilizations. We consider the Alliance as an essential forum for dialogue among civilizations. The Alliance guarantees the necessary space for involving civil society, including women and youth, and for exchanging experiences and building strategies in consolidating the culture of peace.

Lebanon continues to call for rich human and cultural interaction in a constructive and innovative way. We believe that such dialogue begins with the recognition of others' identities and the religious and cultural characteristics of each group. We believe that fear, hostility and intimidation have no place in such an effort.

In that regard, we welcome the tireless efforts made by the United Nations and its specialized agencies and programmes, particularly UNESCO in the cultural, information and technological fields, with a view to enabling societies, especially women and youth, to overcome ignorance and poverty and achieve the Millennium Development Goals. We also welcome all the symposiums that have been held and all the early warning mechanisms that have been deployed to pre-empt conflicts before they erupt and to deal with root causes through the use of preventive diplomacy and the establishment of regional and international partnerships that work to prevent war and conflict, which have greatly afflicted our world.

In the same context, Lebanon has always sent out a message of dialogue, as exemplified during the interactive dialogue that took place in the Security Council last May under the theme "Intercultural dialogue for peace and security" (see S/PV.6322). We do this based on our belief in the importance of dialogue as a choice and a culture, as well as our pledge to abide by the Charter and the International Declaration of Human Rights. We hope that international efforts to promote dialogue among civilizations will succeed in promoting not only a culture of peace but also stability, peace and security in the whole world. The Middle East as a region deserves comprehensive and just peace based on international resolutions, the Arab Peace Initiative in all its aspects, justice and what is right.

The time has come for human development. Such development can only start with the promotion of a culture of peace that enhances communication and tolerance among civilizations and promotes mutual respect among them in a responsible and transparent manner. That should involve all stakeholders at the governmental level in identifying priorities and overcoming disputes and differences through dialogue between developed and developing countries in order to rise to the challenges faced by humankind and find solutions to real problems in line with people's expectations and aspirations.

Mrs. Aitimova (Kazakhstan): First of all, the delegation of Kazakhstan would like to express its appreciation to President Deiss for the holding of this joint debate on items 14 and 15 of the agenda, "Global Agenda for Dialogue among Civilizations" and "Culture of Peace".

We also wish to thank the Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, for the comprehensive report on intercultural, interreligious and intercivilizational dialogue (A/65/269). It provides an overview of activities undertaken by the main United Nations entities engaged in promoting dialogue among civilizations, cultures and religions. Its findings and recommendations take on great significance in our contemporary times, when multilateralism is being strengthened. Yet at the same time, paradoxically, there are forces that cause schisms and unrest in society.

The report, submitted pursuant to resolutions 60/4 and 64/81, covers a wide range of themes, including the International Year for the Rapprochement of Cultures, which was initiated by Kazakhstan and supported by Member States.

We would like also to take note of the detailed information on the Third Forum of the United Nations

Alliance of Civilizations, and the work done so far to carry forward the objectives of the United Nations in fostering global harmony and understanding through outreach and collaboration with faith-based organizations, as well as through communication, awareness-raising and educational activities around the world.

Pursuant to resolution 64/81, in which the Assembly invited the Secretary-General to organize a special activity to celebrate the Year, a special event was organized on 21 April 2010 at United Nations Headquarters by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs. The President of the General Assembly at its sixty-fourth session and the Secretary-General made statements.

At the meeting, different voices were heard, each reflecting on a specific dimension of public action to promote the rapprochement of cultures. The Vice-Minister of Culture of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Mr. Telebekov, presented the unique experience of our country in establishing political and administrative institutions aimed at ensuring communication and understanding among the various cultures that create the mosaic of Kazakhstan.

At Kazakhstan's suggestion, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization — UNESCO — developed an action plan for observing the International Year for the Rapprochement of Cultures with a large number of events, forums and conferences convened worldwide. The Assembly designated UNESCO as the lead agency for the International Year, which was launched at UNESCO headquarters in Paris on 18 February 2010. On that occasion, the Director-General of UNESCO convened a high-level panel on peace and dialogue among cultures, which was comprised of prominent political, intellectual and religious personalities from all regions of the world.

The focus on awareness-raising, implicit in the goals of the Year, resulted in worldwide dissemination of information and the organization of several international and regional conferences, meetings and events. To date, over 700 activities are envisaged within the framework of the Year. The variety of projects presented in the fields of arts, education and youth leadership bears witness to the different forms that dialogue and the rapprochement of cultures can assume. Kazakhstan is of the view that regional organizations play a significant role in strengthening international dialogue.

Acting as a coordinator of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia (CICA), Kazakhstan has developed the action plan for implementing the CICA Catalogue of Confidence-Building Measures in humanitarian issues, and also organized a series of international conferences on intercultural cooperation and tolerance.

More recently, the Alliance of Civilizations has held a vast array of high-profile events on the themes of multiculturalism and global understanding, both of which have gained high priority on its political agenda.

The contributions of the relevant United Nations entities provided valuable input to the report and are highlighted in its first two sections, which are devoted to the International Year for the Rapprochement of Cultures, which is being celebrated in 2010 under the aegis of UNESCO. The third section is devoted to the Third Forum of the Alliance of Civilizations, held in Rio de Janiero in May 2010.

In addition to the International Year for the Rapprochement of Cultures and the Alliance of Civilizations, the United Nations system has continued to undertake a wide range of educational and communication activities to achieve the Year's objectives.

Another valuable contribution of the United Nations system to promoting interreligious dialogue consists in collaboration with faith-based organizations and engaging them in its policy and advocacy work. Such initiatives have a double positive effect: they bring together peoples from different faiths to discuss issues they have in common and they help to link those groups as partners with the United Nations and its development objectives.

In that context, President Nursultan Nazarbayev's initiative to convene congresses of leaders of the world's traditional religions, held in Kazakhstan, has been thriving since 2003 and has added to international efforts to promote interreligious and intercultural dialogue. I am convinced that Kazakhstan's forum, which has been widely recognized as an effective platform to discuss the role of religious leaders in fostering peace and other issues, will continue to contribute in an extremely meaningful way towards

developing the worldwide process of the dialogue of civilizations.

I would like to stress that tolerance, trust, tradition and transparency constitute the guiding principles of Kazakhstan's 2010 chairmanship of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). The key event in that context was the OSCE High-level Conference on Tolerance and Non-Discrimination, held in Astana on 29 and 30 June this year. That forum demonstrated very effectively the importance of sharing experiences with regard to inter-ethnic and interreligious accord, as well as the need to fulfil commitments to promote the OSCE values of tolerance, non-discrimination and respect for diversity. In the wider context, the theme of tolerance will also be highlighted during our 2011 chairmanship of the Organization of the Islamic Conference.

In conclusion, let me express my confidence that our common collective effort at all levels, from the grass-roots to the international, will reduce mistrust and prejudice and enhance genuine dialogue and cooperation among our myriad cultures, thereby fostering mutual understanding and stability in the world.

Mr. Al-Jarman (United Arab Emirates) (*spoke in Arabic*): The discussions of the General Assembly today on the two items relating to the Global Agenda for Dialogue among Civilizations and the Culture of Peace take on particular importance at a time when humankind continues to face growing trends of inequality, occupation, oppression, conflict, violations of human rights and other forms of hatred and racism. Those trends reveal growing manifestations of extremism and defamation towards the cultures and beliefs of others. Recent public tensions resulting from the irresponsible and intolerant campaigns calling for attacks on Islam and Muslims, and foreigners in general, and public reactions towards those campaigns underline the gravity of this problem and its implications. They also provide a strong motive for us to redouble our efforts towards strengthening mechanisms of dialogue and religious and cultural tolerance among all peoples, who all without exception share in the common heritage of humankind.

The United Arab Emirates — which believes that dialogue among civilizations and a culture of peace are key priorities in its global strategy for protecting societies against all forms of violence, extremism and terrorism — was one of the first countries to support the initiative on dialogue among civilizations launched by Turkey and Spain in 2005, as well as the initiative launched by the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, and all other important endeavours carried out by the United Nations in that regard. The United Arab Emirates also supported the Madrid Declaration of the World Conference on Dialogue in 2008, which called for promoting the principles of peace and dialogue among religions, and the recent ministerial meeting of the Alliance of Civilizations, which was held on the margins of the general debate at the current session of the General Assembly.

The United Arab Emirates has sought to build bridges of confidence and partnerships with the rest of the world through promoting a culture of dialogue, tolerance, openness and constructive cooperation with all countries, and regional and international groups. Those principles have also been reflected in a series of national legislative measures and laws that ensure harmony and peaceful coexistence among ethnic groups and followers of different faiths, and guarantee their freedom to practise their religious rites and ceremonies and express their cultural diversity in the United Arab Emirates. That has contributed to consolidating justice, strengthening the rule of law, and promoting respect for human rights and stability in the United Arab Emirates.

The efforts by the United Arab Emirates were not limited only to the national level, but also extended to the international level, including through the provision of direct and indirect economic, humanitarian and relief assistance to developing countries and countries emerging from conflict and natural disasters. This was done with a view to supporting efforts aimed at achieving national reconciliation, rehabilitation and stability in those countries, and in promoting a culture of peace and respect for human rights. As a member of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage, under the auspices of UNESCO, the United Arab Emirates has worked on enhancing its multifaceted contribution to the protection of the common heritage of mankind.

We attach great importance to the efforts of the United Nations and other Member States to strengthening international peace and security, the rule of law, concepts of tolerance, understanding, multilateralism and solidarity among peoples, and a

culture of peace. We emphasize that in order to achieve all those goals, we need to start with a genuine global partnership that aims at encouraging dialogue among the various cultures and civilizations and at instilling the spirit of tolerance and respect for the sacred sites of other peoples and understanding the sensitive aspects of their cultures, especially in our globalized age, with its modern communication technologies that provide unique and ever greater opportunities for connecting and reaching people.

As we believe that dialogue among civilizations must take various forms, including North-South dialogue, East-West dialogue and other forms of cultural exchange, we affirm that mutual enrichment of any dialogue in that context must be based on equality, objectivity and transparency. Such activities must also include adequate measures to address any acts of violence or discrimination based on religion, race or sex, in order to contain their negative impact on societies. We therefore call for the development of a standardized global approach to deal with acts that constitute a clear and continuing threat to peace, security and stability in the world. Measures to criminalize incitement of violence on religious pretexts, including incitement to abuse or desecrate sanctities of other religions, should also be adopted.

We also emphasize, in that regard, the need to address attempts aimed at defaming religions and at inciting religious hatred in general, by developing local, regional and international strategies based on constructive debates and dialogue among cultures and civilizations and full respect for all beliefs and religions. In that regard, we declare our support, which has been continuous for the past 10 years, for the Global Agenda for Dialogue among Civilizations, adopted by the General Assembly in resolution 56/6. We also affirm our support for the declaration of 2010 as the International Year for the Rapprochement of Cultures, with a view to demonstrating that diversity is a source of enrichment, creativity and innovation for humanity.

This also leads us to realizing the importance of demonstrating a true and serious international determination to address the root causes of emerging conflicts and disputes, especially the causes relating to that oldest of conflicts, namely, the continued Israeli occupation of Palestinian and other Arab territories.

Finally, we hope that our deliberations on the two agenda items will lead to strengthened plans for achieving greater understanding, rapprochement and openness among countries and peoples, especially in containing and addressing the most pressing regional and international issues, including issues of security, peace, disarmament, poverty, unemployment and violations of human rights.

Mr. Al-Hubail (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): I have the pleasure to convey our thanks to the Secretary-General for the report before us (A/65/629), which details the achievements and activities of United Nations bodies with respect to intercivilizational, intercultural and interreligious dialogue. I should also like to pay tribute to the efforts of UNESCO for having successfully celebrated 2010 as the International Year for the Rapprochement of Cultures. We should like to thank the Director-General of UNESCO for her annual report on the International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World 2001-2010.

The State of Kuwait is happy to participate in this discussion. We would like to reaffirm that the world currently faces great challenges resulting from views and ideologies characterized by extremism and bigotry, held by some groups, entities and individuals in certain countries of the world, which do not respect the cultures of others. Such intolerance has even reached a level where some use ideological and physical violence to impose their views and ideas.

If we want to successfully support a comprehensive and realistic dialogue among the civilizations and peoples of the world, we must share a sincere desire to combat the extremist ideas and actions on the part of some who disparage others' religions, given that such ideas hamper United Nations efforts to bring about rapprochement. Otherwise, the other side is given new justifications for its attempts to spread its violent ideas and convince others of the correctness of their views.

My delegation salutes resolution 64/81, which states, in paragraph 5, that the right to freedom of expression carries with it duties and responsibilities that may be subject to certain restrictions. We must discourage incitement against religious beliefs, because that has negative consequences for human rights. We believe that in that regard a general evaluation is needed of the efforts of the United Nations and

non-governmental organizations, as well as of efforts and initiatives by regional and international organizations.

To achieve a strong and sound foundation for dialogue among civilizations, we need to unify the efforts and programmes of the various entities in order to promote interreligious and intercultural dialogue among civilizations. That will lead to the spread of the principles of peace, tolerance and respect. We must recall here that a dialogue or alliance among civilizations does not mean a fusion of cultures, creeds and faiths. Civilization is the tent that includes all cultures and religions; the purpose of dialogue among civilizations is to study the roots of differences and to deal with them, while being respectful of our differences.

The State of Kuwait supports the efforts of the United Nations regarding an ongoing dialogue among civilizations. As decreed by our head of State, we have put in place a national plan of action based on our belief in outreach to and interaction among civilizations. We have acceded to the initiative of the Alliance of Civilizations, joined its Group of Friends and participated in all its forums, particularly the third, held in Rio de Janeiro in May. Openness towards other cultures, tolerance and interaction with others have been part of Kuwaiti culture, intellect and ideology from the beginning. That is enshrined in our Constitution, which allows others to practise their religion freely, safely and in peace, and this has attracted people of 120 nationalities and from all cultures and religions to live in our country in stability, tolerance and mutual respect.

A culture of peace and coexistence, based on outreach among civilizations, should be based on strategic principles that give it strength and continuity, and should help civil society, individuals and institutions to achieve their objectives. We cite in that connection Kuwait's national plan of action, which has set forth four strategic principles to help achieve its aims. First, we should reinforce our culture of peace, moderation and tolerance; secondly, combat extremism, terrorism and violence; build a societal and national consensus based on the principles and values of outreach among civilizations; and fourthly, cooperate with regional and international institutions, thus laying the foundations for understanding of our shared human concerns. Additionally, Kuwait has established an International Centre for Compromise that calls for moderation in thought and compromise in dealing with others, which are based on the principles of our religion. The Centre has held many conferences and symposiums at the national, regional and international levels.

Various specialized Government departments have set up programmes and forums aimed at every sector of society in order to achieve awareness of moderation and understanding among people. We have held and sponsored many international and regional conferences and forums promoting an attitude of moderation in Islam and how to spread religious tolerance and respect for beliefs and cultural specificities among peoples, as well as how to achieve equality so that we may arrive at a climate of international security in which all civilizations can live in peace.

Mr. Li Baodong (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): The Chinese delegation welcomes the report of the Secretary-General on the culture of peace (A/65/269). In our present world, increasing globalization, the spread of information technologies and more frequent exchanges among peoples of different countries have brought civilizations ever closer to each other, creating favourable conditions for dialogue and cooperation among them. In the meantime, peace and development have yet to become a reality. New global challenges keep emerging; clashes between civilizations have intensified; misunderstandings among religions and cultures still exist; and religious and racial discrimination are far from being eliminated.

Against such a background, it has become all the more important to strengthen dialogue and cooperation among civilizations. In recent years, the General Assembly has held a number of high-level meetings on intercultural and interfaith dialogue, which have highlighted the importance and urgency of cultural cooperation and emphasized the intrinsic links between dialogue among civilizations and peace and development. This momentum of cooperation should be maintained. At the same time, we should gain experience and learn lessons from these efforts, while identifying effective ways and best practices for enhancing the understanding, mutual trust and cooperation that can ensure concrete progress in this area.

China believes that the following three points should be observed in conducting dialogue and

cooperation among civilizations. First, we should respect each other and conduct dialogue as equals. Diversity is a basic feature of human civilization, as well as a common asset of human society. There are close to 200 countries in the world. Despite their differences in terms of social systems, levels of development, cultures, traditions and religious beliefs, all have contributed to human progress. It is therefore necessary for all countries to respect and learn from one another and live together in peace. Extremism, the imposition of beliefs or values on others, discrimination based on religious, racial or other grounds, bias, and xenophobia should be firmly rejected.

Secondly, we must work on multiple fronts in order to achieve synergy. Culture and religion touch a wide range of areas and involve complex issues, so there can be no cookie-cutter approach to dialogue and cooperation in this regard. Within the United Nations, multiple initiatives and mechanisms, such as resolution 64/81 on the promotion of interreligious and intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation for peace, and the Alliance of Civilizations, have been launched. With their distinct features and advantages, those initiatives and mechanisms should strengthen communication and coordination among themselves. The United Nations should play an important role as a platform for cultural exchange and should enable the various initiatives and mechanisms to complement each other and grow side by side.

Thirdly, we should involve all sectors of society and work for concrete results. Dialogue among different civilizations is ultimately about promoting people-to-people contact. It should thus not be limited to the national level. Rather, civil society, academia and the media should all be mobilized to disseminate the message of a culture of peace to communities and schools so as to bring the whole society on board. It is particularly important to convey a message of tolerance, understanding and respect to the youth so as to build up their capacity to resist religious hatred and discrimination. The media should conscientiously assume their social responsibility by upholding morality and contributing to the creation of an atmosphere of tolerance and understanding in society.

China is a multi-ethnic and multireligious country. The Chinese civilization has been imbued with the concept of harmony throughout history. The Chinese Government adheres to the policy of freedom of religion, fully respects its citizens' religious beliefs and safeguards that freedom with the Constitution and other laws. Different religions in China coexist in harmony and enjoy equal status. Religious and non-religious citizens respect each other and live together in harmony. Religious figures in China carry forward fine traditions of patriotism, religious devotion and philanthropy and actively participate in charity work and other public welfare undertakings, thus contributing to social harmony and stability.

China favours cultural diversity and believes that different civilizations should learn from each other and seek common ground, while shelving differences, and should jointly contribute to the prosperity and progress of mankind. China actively supports dialogue and cooperation among civilizations and religions and has hosted major events to that end, such as the Asia-Europe Meeting Interfaith Dialogue and the World Buddhist Forum.

In two weeks' time, Expo 2010 Shanghai will draw to a close. As the first such global event hosted by a developing country in the history of world expos, it has attracted the participation of 246 countries and international organizations and over 60 million visitors over a period of five months. The Shanghai World Expo offers a platform for countries to demonstrate their cultural achievements and share development experience, giving full expression to the diversity of the world's civilizations. It has become a showcase of cultural diversity and harmony and an event of happiness and friendship for all. The Chinese Government will further strengthen cultural dialogue and exchanges with other countries with a view to contributing to the creation of a world of lasting peace, common prosperity and harmony.

Mr. Benítez Versón (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): The Assembly declared the period 2001 to 2010 the International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World (resolution 53/25). Today, as we face the end of the decade, we must frankly recognize that we have not met the goals we set for ourselves.

Cuba considers strict respect for the United Nations Charter and its principles to be the fundamental basis for achieving a culture of peace. Peace is not only the absence of conflicts. Promoting a culture of peace requires the promotion of education at all levels,

sustainable economic and social development and respect for all human rights for all people.

There cannot be a culture of peace unless understanding, tolerance and solidarity are promoted, along with respect for the history, diverse religions and individual character of each nation. Achieving a culture of peace requires respect for cultural diversity.

We watch with concern some doctrines promoting the clash of civilizations, demonizing cultures and religions that are thousands of years old. Any doctrine based on racial or cultural superiority must be firmly rejected. Equally unacceptable is the intention of some to identify certain cultures and religions with terrorism and violence.

To succeed in establishing a culture of peace, clear commitments and concrete actions to promote sustainable development and environmental protection are necessary. Obstacles to the exercise of the right of peoples to self-determination must be also eliminated.

There cannot be a culture of peace as long as the acquisition of territories through war is not recognized as unacceptable and some States act in ways contrary to the United Nations Charter and international law. A culture of peace is not promoted by threatening the sovereignty and independence of other nations. How can a culture of peace be achieved if, on one hand, annual military expenditures increase at a dizzying rate — reaching the chilling figure of $1.531 trillion — while, on the other hand, the number of hungry people reaches the record figure of 925 million — nearly one sixth of the world's population?

The introduction of the study of different cultures and civilizations in educational curricula would be an excellent contribution to a culture of peace. The teaching of languages, history and the philosophies of civilizations could be also included.

Mass media also have an important role in spreading human values. We must promote ethical conduct and responsibility on the part of the media, so that they contribute to mutual respect and dialogue among civilizations.

Cuba supports the Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace and the Global Agenda for Dialogue among Civilizations and its Programme of Action. We also support UNESCO programmes and practical initiatives on this topic.

A better world is possible. As wisely stated in the Constitution of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, "since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed". The solution lies in our hands. We must act without further delay so that a culture of peace and the Alliance among Civilizations finally prevail over the culture of violence and war.

Mr. Kleib (Indonesia): Let me begin by thanking the Secretary-General for his report on intercultural, interreligious and intercivilizational dialogue (A/65/269). We are also grateful for the report of the Director-General of UNESCO on the activities carried out during the International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World, 2001-2010 (see A/65/299).

Indonesia welcomes and commends the role of the various United Nations entities in supporting intercultural, interreligious and intercivilizational cooperation worldwide. Indonesia is also deeply appreciative of the work of the Tripartite Forum on Interfaith Cooperation for Peace and the Alliance of Civilizations to promote a culture of peace.

Efforts to promote a culture of peace represent an important part of the interaction among all cultures and civilizations. Dialogue and cooperation among peoples, cultures, religions, faiths and civilizations are essential for the growth of a global culture of peace. There is no doubt that much of the future of humankind depends on peaceful coexistence and cooperation among civilizations, cultures and religions. Unfortunately, religious hatred and intolerance, rather than diminishing, are on the increase.

In the face of the recent polarization among peoples, as faith-based discrimination and racism were seen to be on the rise, we continue to believe that what unites us is much greater than what divides us. In our view, there is always room to nurture and celebrate our common values. It is our responsibility to ensure that the world's rich cultural diversity is appreciated as the divine blessing that it is.

That diversity is the invaluable collective heritage of humankind, which we ought to celebrate and treasure. In order to turn our diversity to our advantage, we need to scale up efforts to combat racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related

intolerance, including discrimination against persons based on their religion and beliefs.

In our much more connected world today, action by a small and distant group can inflict significant damage upon all the international community. As we saw only recently, religious radicalism by a local religious minority leader is capable of causing considerable damage to global interfaith harmony and world peace.

Indonesia would therefore like to see efforts to promote a culture of peace focusing more on the minority elements at strategic social levels, particularly those who lead groups of people. In that connection, we are concerned about the absence of a multilaterally negotiated instrument containing normative standards that can help diffuse religious radicalism. It is an ideal which we should work towards establishing.

Indonesia is firmly committed to promoting a culture of peace. We keenly support initiatives that deal with the challenges of cultural diversity, as they are very much in line with what we are already doing in Indonesia. Dialogue and mutual accommodation among faiths and cultures have featured prominently in Indonesia's history. That is how we have woven, from the many strands of our ethnic cultures and traditions, the single fabric of our nationhood. In Indonesia, dialogue is a prominent tool for ensuring harmony and peaceful living among the various communal groups and for ensuring stability and promoting development at the national level.

Moreover, we empower the moderates whose voices would otherwise be drowned by the agitation of extremists. In Indonesia, we are also organizing interfaith and intercultural dialogue at the regional, interregional and global levels. We have organized such dialogue in tandem with other Governments, international organizations, civil society and the mass media. Here, at the United Nations, we have consistently supported all resolutions on the agenda item "Culture of peace".

Indonesia also attaches great significance to the initiatives of Member States to promote respect for diversity, freedom, justice and tolerance. All such existing initiatives in interfaith, intercultural and intercivilizational dialogue have become part of a global network aimed at promoting peace and harmony.

However, it is important to point out that even all those undertakings are not enough if they remain only within conference halls. We must therefore recognize that, indeed, dialogue is not an end in itself. All those dialogues going on all over the world today will amount to nothing if they do not lead to cooperative action at the grass-roots level.

It is our responsibility to ensure that those dialogues lead to the development of communities that work for the welfare of their fellow human beings, while enlightening one another on the need for mutual understanding and mutual appreciation. Dialogue should foster communities that take on a positive role in the life of the nation by encouraging and inspiring the Government to adhere to democratic principles and to promote and protect human rights and individual freedoms, regardless of ethnicity or religion. It should lead to communities that appreciate the unique qualities and perspectives of other peoples.

If all nations can nurture such communities, then we are well on our way to developing a global culture of peace.

Mr. Cabactulan (Philippines): At the outset, I would like to extend the gratitude of the Republic of the Philippines to the President for his able leadership of the General Assembly at its sixty-fifth session. As the community of nations moves forward in pursuit of our common goals of lasting peace, progress and prosperity, may I express the firm commitment of the Philippines to work closely with him and our partners in order to achieve our shared vision for ourselves and our posterity.

We meet at a time of great opportunities and many challenges. Technological developments, all made at a breakneck pace, bring the bright promise of our peoples being drawn ever closer together. Yet even as we see different peoples and communities coming together in the spirit of understanding and charity with the message of peace and coexistence, there are those who seek to break the bonds of goodwill that have brought many peoples together. For those dark elements seek to inflict pain and suffering, to foster rancour and resentment, and to force violence and fear upon the world.

It is regrettable that our people have to endure violence in its many malevolent forms. Peoples are broken further apart by those who seek to sow confusion, doubt and suspicion. There are those who

prey on the disenfranchised and the marginalized and surreptitiously use the faith, culture and religion of others to push and justify their own dark agenda. Faith, culture and religion have been turned against themselves and used to drive people to despair and to perform acts of violence.

The Philippines joins other nations in condemning those acts in all their forms and manifestations. The Philippines likewise asserts that such acts should not be associated in any way with any culture, faith or religion.

For the Philippines and, indeed, for the rest of the world, faith, culture and religion rightly give millions of people hope in this world, the will to treat others like themselves, and the impetus to work with others towards a more inclusive and more understanding world. That abiding belief has moved us to harness the world community's collective strength to further strengthen the foundations of a world respectful of humanity's diversity.

Civil strife in the southern Philippines brought out the importance of interfaith dialogue in the promotion of understanding, peace, cooperation and development among stakeholders. In that same spirit, Mindanao will once again commemorate its annual Week of Peace, begun in the mid 1990s. Our work continues to this day, with interfaith dialogue and reconciliation remaining key features of the Philippine medium-term development plan.

Seeking to engage the world community in that endeavour, in 2004 the Philippines initiated resolution 59/23, on the promotion of interreligious dialogue. That resolution proved to be a landmark in that it opened the portals of the United Nations to interfaith partnerships and cooperation in the cause of justice and peace.

Since then, we have seen a series of resolutions on interfaith, interreligious and intercivilizational dialogue approved by consensus: resolution 60/10, entitled "Promotion of interreligious dialogue and cooperation for peace"; resolutions 61/221, 62/90 and 63/22, jointly introduced by the Philippines and Pakistan from 2006 to 2008; and resolution 64/81, also jointly presented by the Philippines and Pakistan, on the promotion of interreligious and intercultural cooperation for peace.

The concrete outcomes of those resolutions include the holding by the General Assembly of the High-Level Dialogue on Interreligious and Intercultural Understanding and Cooperation for Peace; the designation of the Office for Economic and Social Council Support and Coordination in the Department of Economic and Social Affairs as the focal unit in the Secretariat to handle, within the United Nations system, all interreligious, intercultural and intercivilizational matters; and the proclamation of 2010 as the International Year for the Rapprochement of Cultures.

A core group of 16 countries, 3 United Nations bodies and the 110-member Committee of Religious Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) at the United Nations was formed, leading to the holding in 2005 of the Conference on Interfaith Cooperation for Peace at United Nations Headquarters. That became the troika of the Tripartite Forum on Interfaith Cooperation for Peace, which has now grown to include 55 Governments, 15 United Nations agencies and 110 religious NGOs at the United Nations. It has developed a new paradigm of understanding and cooperation, which is described as faith-fuelled and love-inspired.

Likewise, an informal summit of like-minded world leaders met in 2005 on the sidelines of the General Assembly and adopted a declaration urging efforts for interreligious, intercultural and intercivilizational dialogue and cooperation. We have postponed the similar informal summit scheduled for this year until next year so that it can be immediately preceded by a ministerial meeting.

Beyond these positive developments at the United Nations, five Asia-Pacific Regional Interfaith Dialogues have been held: in Jakarta; Cebu, Philippines; Waitangi, New Zealand; Phnom Penh; and Perth, Australia. Between regions, we have had six interfaith dialogues in the Asia-Europe Meeting: in Bali, Indonesia; Larnaca, Cyprus; Nanjing, China; and in Amsterdam, Seoul and Madrid.

The following have also been held: the third Global Inter-Media Dialogue, in Bali; the World Conference on Dialogue, in Madrid; the sixth general meeting of the World Public Forum "Dialogue of Civilization", in Rhodes, Greece; the second Alliance of Civilizations Forum, in Istanbul, Turkey; the 2009 Parliament of the World's Religions, in Melbourne,

Australia; and the third Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions, in Astana.

In a clear demonstration of its commitment to the cause of interfaith dialogue, the Philippines hosted the special Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) ministerial meeting on interfaith dialogue and cooperation for peace in Manila in December 2009. Espoused by 118 member countries of the NAM, it was the first movement of its kind that mainstreamed civil society, particularly the religious and faith organizations, as governmental partners in such vital areas as peace and development.

Those and other efforts have been documented in a book entitled Peace through Interfaith Dialogue: Philippine Diplomacy and the Promotion of Mutual Understanding, Respect and Tolerance. We are pleased to provide copies of this book to the members of the Assembly.

In April 2010, I was honoured to join the special event marking the commemoration of 2010 as the International Year for the Rapprochement of Cultures. Held just ahead of the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, which the Philippines chaired, the event was a fitting capstone to what we have worked so hard to achieve all these years.

But our work is not yet done. Sustaining the momentum is vital, as is engaging all stakeholders in the interfaith dialogue process. The push and pull between those who stand together for dialogue, tolerance, understanding and respect, on the one hand, and those who seek the fall of all into the abyss of suspicion, bigotry, confusion and violence, on the other hand, continues. We must continue moving forward together.

For its part, the Philippines will continue to work closely with and consult our partners on the tabling of another draft resolution on the agenda item on the culture of peace. We seek to further expand interfaith dialogue to include, inter alia, dialogue with indigenous peoples. We must ensure that, on the road to greater peace and development, dialogue is as inclusive and broad as possible.

As we welcome the introduction of Jordan's draft resolution on the holding of World Interfaith Harmony Week (A/65/L.5) as a reminder of our continuing duties, we will consult with our co-sponsors on the best way forward on the proposal for a decade of interreligious dialogue as we await the report of the Secretary-General on the matter at the sixty-sixth session.

We encourage all Member States to submit their comments on the Secretary-General's report concerning the issue. We also urge all Member States to participate actively in the efforts to foster interfaith dialogue.

The road ahead of us and the journey forward remain long. However, we are confident that we will reach our destination, with every milestone that we achieve. Fully resolved to turn our vision into reality, we will forge on undeterred, learning from each other, understanding one another and respecting others as we respect ourselves.

Mr. Dos Santos (Paraguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to express the gratitude of the Government of Paraguay for the preparation of the Secretary-General's report on agenda item 15, "Culture of peace" (A/65/269), and his note transmitting the report of the UNESCO Director-General (A/65/299). We are sure they will contribute to our debate today.

The delegation of Paraguay would like to speak once again in support of the culture of peace. We want to resolutely cooperate to achieve the noble objective of the United Nations and its Members: achieving a broad and deep understanding among the various cultures. For that, we have endorsed and will continue to support enthusiastically the initiatives for a dialogue between different peoples, Governments and religions.

Humankind is unique in its origins but diverse in its cultural manifestations. The only way for it to overcome the injustice and violence afflicting it is through dialogue. Dialogue must be based on accepting diversity. In violence, unlike dialogue, there is no acceptance. There is only the elimination of different ideas, or at least an attempt to do so. Dialogue will be dialogue only if we accept — or better yet, tolerate — the cultural and religious differences that identify each community and each nation but that, ultimately, are the inseparable elements that make up humankind.

In order to promote the dialogue between cultures and civilizations, my delegation wishes to propose that the United Nations proclaim 30 July of each year World Friendship Day, to contribute to building a more fraternal global society, thus fostering the culture of peace, respect and mutual acceptance at the international level, without any kind of distinction or discrimination. This initiative, which has been a

tradition in my country for over 50 years, has the institutional support of the Government. It was circulated in document A/64/883 at the previous Assembly session and was announced in the Hall during the general debate of the current session by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of my country as a proposal to renew mutual appreciation and recognition between our peoples (see A/65/PV.23).

Appropriately, our delegation will conduct the relevant consultations with the various countries and regional groups in order to present shortly a draft resolution that proclaims the World Friendship Day. I would like to request all delegations to lend their support to this initiative so that it will meet with success.

Mr. Salsabili (Islamic Republic of Iran): We are here today for a joint debate on two interrelated agenda items in order to follow up on the progress of our work on the enhanced promotion of a culture of peace and the Global Agenda for Dialogue among Civilizations through interreligious, intercultural and intercivilizational dialogue and cooperation. Let me thank the Secretary-General and the Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) for all of their efforts to prepare the two thought-provoking reports contained in documents A/65/269 and A/65/299 on these two very significant items on the agenda of the General Assembly.

Cultural diversity as the centrepiece of the two agenda items — "Global Agenda for Dialogue among Civilizations" and "Culture of peace" — is thoroughly discussed and reflected in these two reports as a real and basic fact of today's regional and international relations. Such a fundamental fact should not be seen as a barrier to our collective endeavour to advance dialogue and understanding.

Respect for cultural diversity at the national and international levels and recognition of the fact that cultural diversity is a source of unity rather than division within the international community will indeed promote peace and security. Thus, cultural diversity is an asset that enriches the common human cultural heritage. Hence, continued cultural domination through policies of cultural hegemony and efforts to eliminate cultural identities through the globalization process will result in major setbacks to the promotion of human rights, international cooperation and the mutual enrichment of the cultural life of humankind.

On the other hand, respect for and understanding of others could be considered key elements in enhancing international cooperation. The practice of listening to others rather than confronting or offending them should be cultivated and promoted as a culture among actors at all levels of international politics. Globalization as a process can pose challenges and create opportunities in this domain.

Repressive measures in the increasingly globalized world could take the form of disinformation through the global media and modern communication technologies. Religious intolerance, including Islamophobia, created as a result of aggressive media policies, seeks to demonize particular cultures and religions and can lead ultimately to hatred and exclusion. This should be prevented through an innovative and alternative plan for international cooperation among all nations.

We believe that diversity is necessary for humankind to flourish. We should resist the perceptions and temptations that set individual against individual, group against group and nation against nation. Above all, ways to eliminate the defamation of religions and discrimination based on religion or belief should be deliberated. Religious intolerance, the spreading of hatred, xenophobia and racial discrimination are but a few examples of issues long faced by the international community. Many of us have voiced our vehement condemnation of the defamation of religions, yet we have continued to witness instances of poisonous actions against certain religions and their sacred books, beliefs and followers. The recent attempt to put the Koran, the most sacred book of each and every one of the more than 1.6 billion Muslims of the world, into a fire was a clear example of such a crime. Such actions should be duly dealt with by States.

This alarming act was also a warning against the rising trend of discriminatory national laws and policies adopted and implemented against any religion. Attempts to stigmatize groups of people — in particular, people of certain ethnicities and religious minorities — on the basis of their religion under various pretexts related to issues of security and illegal immigration are among the major obstacles to our approach to respect cultural diversity.

One way to respond could be to enhance the cultural policies of Member States at the national and regional levels in order to strengthen respect for cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue in practical

terms. The Non-Aligned Movement Centre for Human Rights and Cultural Diversity in Tehran has been established and is actively contributing to the promotion of such an idea.

Besides honouring the events marking the commemoration of 2010 as the International Year for the Rapprochement of Cultures, one of the other practical achievements in the process of promoting cultural diversity as a means of cooperation to enhance peace among different nations is respect for traditional common cultures.

On 23 February, the General Assembly unanimously adopted resolution 64/253, entitled "International Day of Nowruz". The resolution was the fruit of joint efforts by eight Member States, including the Islamic Republic of Iran. While the resolution reaffirms the purposes and principles of the Charter, in particular the achievements of international cooperation in the economic, social and cultural fields — including, inter alia, resolution 56/6, on the Global Agenda for Dialogue among Civilizations; the Declaration of the Principles of International Cultural Cooperation, and the Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity, adopted by UNESCO — it also underlines the appeal for greater solidarity on the basis of recognition of cultural diversity, of awareness of the unity of humankind and of the development of intercultural exchanges. It emphasizes the need to achieve an objective understanding of all civilizations and to enhance constructive interaction and cooperative engagement among civilizations by playing a major role in strengthening the ties among peoples based on mutual respect and the ideals of peace and good-neighbourliness. Nowruz traditions and rituals reflect the ancient cultural customs of the civilizations of East and West that have influenced those civilizations through the interchange of human values.

Finally, let me confirm the fact that the promotion of dialogue among civilizations and cultures is a key component of UNESCO's mission and activities and has led that organization to shoulder a significant portion of that task. With this in mind, my delegation will spare no effort in cooperating at the next meeting of the UNESCO High Panel on Peace and Dialogue among Cultures, which will be convened by the Director-General of UNESCO within the next two months at United Nations Headquarters here in New York to identify new avenues and modalities for future action.

Mr. Haroon (Pakistan): I thank the President for convening this very important debate of the General Assembly this morning. From the attendance here, one can be absolutely sure that peace does not have as large a following in the Assembly as the elections did a few days ago, when there was only standing room here. And of course, as we know, anything that is contentious is bound to lead away from, and not towards, peace. So, judging by the visuals here today, I fear that we have a long way to go in pursuing this matter of introducing the culture of peace.

I am not terribly sure whether, by not including the culture of peace in the Millennium Development Goals, we have done something good for this institution or not. But, surely, this matter is very important.

We start off by citing anything that becomes contentious as a danger to peace, but I think that there is much more to it than that. There will always be divisive policies, ideologies and the belief that might is right to inflict upon others what concerns people about their way of life. I think the greatest hindrance to anything cogent emerging is that, when we sit in this Hall, we all speak of our ways, our countries, our delegations and our groups. If we continue to do that, I am not terribly sure that peace will prevail. There may be outward calm and there may be a lot that is not said out of respect for each others' feelings, but certainly peace will not prevail in the world or in this Hall, other than in outward appearance.

The Charter of the Organization has enunciated the principles of practising tolerance, living together in peace with one another as good neighbours, uniting our strengths to maintain international peace and security and promoting social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom. I think that the moment the Charter spells out the concept of good neighbours, it seems like an exclusion or preclusion of those beyond our boundaries who consider themselves to be impregnable or invulnerable as sovereign States.

Peace should not be just the extension of good-neighbourly relationships; it should go beyond and exist as a culture. That is what we are saying here today. I find that the Charter is not sufficient. It is in fact deficient in the proclamation of what we are trying to achieve.

In 1999, we reaffirmed our intention to continue to work to achieve peaceful coexistence in line with the United Nations Charter. That was a declaration based

on the principles of multilateral cooperation, respect for life, the promotion and practice of non-violence through education, dialogue, cooperation and commitment to the peaceful settlement of disputes.

Now, as far as the peaceful settlement of disputes is concerned, I am afraid that nowhere in the world — judging from the fact that accidents taking place on narrow streets can be the pretext for small-scale, or even large-scale, rioting — have we really even conceived of a culture that would promote peace instead. And history has proven that no trauma that follows such disputes can be resolved by a peaceful ending.

Some of the greatest changes in history have taken place on the backs of disputes that have changed the way humankind thinks. They have changed the way the Earth is progressing towards a better future. I am afraid that that culture cannot be born out of a lack of dispute when disputes are settled with verbiage that cannot be understood by those who sign the documents. These things will have to be resolved in their own fashion. It is that resolution which leads to change, not the words spelled out in a document.

I know that we have a common set of universal values. Peace is the core message of all religions. It is not war alone that challenges peace, but it is one of the primary indicators of lack of peace. The first introduction of war on this planet was, in fact, at the beginning of the new age that started in the first century, when Judaism was joined first by Christianity, and later with Islam. The monotheistic religions on record have produced more wars and more suffering in history than anything else before them, yet the profession of faith is based upon peace.

So we have to understand that it is peace that we seek. The culture of this peace is not easily definable. If Charles I of England had not abrogated Parliament and sent the Rump Parliament home, the changes that brought democracy and the Commonwealth to England might never have taken place. Yet from that catharsis and that trauma grew a very serious pledge to steer the world towards better peace.

Unfortunately, religion keeps a strong grip on hate. Hate is a very strong weapon in the hands of different faiths, and it is being used mercilessly. The complete killing of the Mayan culture in Central America was based not on a profession of peace and love, but upon hate and the extermination of an entire culture — not just the extermination of the people, but the burning of their famous libraries, which many now believe to have been the largest repositories of world science, education and history.

Today we see in various parts of the world all sorts of misunderstandings that are again based on faith. We had a recent expression of it here in America, where hate was again put forward in an attempt to create Samuel Huntington's clash of civilizations. I feel that we are very lucky that due cognizance was taken, and I say this with a great amount of respect for many organizations, not only the American Government but the Organization of the Islamic Conference, which kept a harness on the issue and brought it to its due end.

We need to stand together to decry those who, in the name of faith, extend agendas that are no longer acceptable to the people of this world. Finding common ground is certainly important, but I feel that, more than that, among the great things that are needed, one would be education. A second would be an easily available, honest and sincere approach to justice. To my mind, the third would be the acceptance of a common agenda in all constitutions of the world that profess and express the need for a culture of peace as a preamble and a necessity — not mere lip service, but an understanding of its implications. We should pass it into law.

I would say that, when we co-sponsored interfaith harmony in the General Assembly with the Philippines; when we speak in many ways in the Assembly; and, of late, when I see my colleagues from the Indian desk sitting here, we have gone a long way in trying to promote understanding. That understanding manifested itself beautifully in the recent tennis finals of the most senior tournament in the world today, the US Open, where it was important, I believe, for India and Pakistan to show the world that we could move towards peace as well.

We recognize the growing need to promote harmony in all its manifestations, and we believe that we must take away challenge and replace it with acceptance. We should take away harassment and replace it with tolerance. We should take away hatred and bring it towards understanding. Cooperation, not the clash of civilizations, must be the paradigm for our future on this planet. In order to make this world a better place for our children, we should share the responsibility to highlight and propagate our common

values of peace, tolerance, equality and sharing — which we have forgotten — and a respect for humanity. We should encourage the next generation to use education and exchange not only to adapt to modernity, but to use modernity and technology to change the world into a better and more peaceful place for all.

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.

United Nations A/65/PV.33

General Assembly

Sixty-fifth session

Official Records

33rd plenary meeting
Monday, 18 October 2010, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Deiss ..... (Switzerland)

In the absence of the President, Mrs. Waffa-Ogoo (Gambia), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Agenda items 14 and 15 (*continued*)

Global Agenda for Dialogue among Civilizations

Report of the Secretary-General (A/65/269)

Culture of peace

Report of the Secretary-General (A/65/269)

Note by the Secretary-General (A/65/299)

Mr. Kurlovich (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): The Republic of Belarus has consistently stood for establishing an atmosphere of respect and mutual understanding among peoples and States belonging to different political and socio-economic systems, and welcomes constructive dialogue among different religions and cultures.

Belarus is a staunch supporter of the idea of intensifying interreligious and intercultural dialogue for peace on the principles of mutual respect, equality and tolerance. Clear testimony to this was the initiative put forward by the President of the Republic of Belarus at the 2005 World Summit on the need to recognize the diversity of paths to progress as one of the values of human civilization. Respect for the uniqueness of States and peoples and for their right to choose their own path underlies international dialogue and is an indispensable condition for the maintenance of international peace and security.

In accordance with the Belarusian Constitution, the State is responsible for the preservation of the country's historical, cultural and spiritual heritage and for the promotion of free development of cultures of all nationalities living there.

In Belarus, there are no conflicts based on ethnic, racial, cultural, linguistic or religious grounds. Twenty-four ethnic and cultural communities are represented by 123 non-governmental organizations, 41 of which enjoy international status. Representatives of all ethnic communities are entitled to use their own native language, and various educational institutions in which Belarusian is not the native tongue allow study in other languages, including Polish, Lithuanian and Hebrew.

More than 25 religious denominations and over 3,000 religious organizations consolidate effective skills of interreligious dialogue in Belarus. The Institute of Religious Dialogue and Interreligious Communication is working successfully within the Synod of the Belarusian Orthodox Church, its highest body.

An excellent example of constructive interaction and cooperation between national associations and State bodies is the Advisory Interethnic Council, under the plenipotentiary on religions and nationalities. The Council is composed of the representatives of more than 20 nationalities, representing the interests of ethnic and cultural associations currently active in Belarus.

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-506. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

Every year, Belarus celebrates the World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development on 21 May and the International Day for Tolerance on 16 November. Biennial national festivals of ethnic cultures promote inter ethnic cooperation in Belarusian society on the basis of respect and equality.

Belarus has become a venue for regular international meetings and productive dialogue among world religious leaders. In November 2009, on the initiative of the Belarusian Orthodox Church, Minsk hosted an international conference under the theme "Christian-Jewish dialogue: religious values as the foundation for mutual respect in civil society amid the global economic crisis".

The conference made an important contribution to establishing closer cooperation between Christian theologians of varying confessions and secular researchers specializing in the area of dialogue between Christians and Jews and the history of Judaism. The conference was attended by representatives of the Vatican, the United States, Germany, Italy, Israel, France, Sweden, Canada and other countries, with the participation of well-known scholars, priests from traditional Christian churches, and rabbis from Jewish communities.

The promotion of mutual understanding and cooperation among various cultural and religious organizations is a key element of Belarusian foreign policy. Within the United Nations, Belarus consistently undertakes practical steps to encourage and maintain the global agenda for dialogue among civilizations. Belarus fully supports the efforts of the Alliance of Civilizations to strengthen dialogue between cultures and religions, and, in the framework of United Nations mechanisms, actively participates in the Tripartite Forum on Interfaith Cooperation for Peace and the Ministerial Meeting on Interfaith Dialogue and Cooperation for Peace.

For Belarus, as a multi-ethnic State at a geographical and historical crossroads of civilizations and with experience in establishing domestic and external conditions for inter ethnic and interreligious friendship, participation in the activities of these forums is a fully legitimate and logical step. We believe that cultural diversity and the promotion of the cultural development of all peoples and nations are a source for the mutual enrichment of the cultural life of humankind. On that basis, Belarus was among the first countries to accede to the UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions.

Belarus traditionally supports General Assembly resolutions aimed at encouraging dialogue among civilizations. Our country was a sponsor of resolution 64/81 on the promotion of interreligious and intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation for peace, and among the first countries to sponsor resolution 64/14, on the Alliance of Civilizations, adopted in November 2009.

At the Ministerial Meeting on Interfaith Dialogue and Cooperation for Peace held in September 2009 in the framework of the sixty-fourth session of the General Assembly, Belarus initiated the idea of convening thematic debates of the General Assembly on interreligious and intercultural dialogue with the participation of religious leaders. The idea was supported by the President of the General Assembly and was incorporated into resolution 64/81 on the promotion of interreligious and intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation for peace. We look forward to such thematic debates being held in the General Assembly in the months to come.

The General Assembly proclaimed 2010 to be the International Year for the Rapprochement of Cultures, which is also the culmination of the International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World. The Belarusian delegation believes that young people should play an eminent role in furthering successful dialogue among civilizations. At the High-level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly this year (see A/65/PV.5), Belarus proposed the establishment of a global partnership to promote the interests of youth, to be identified as "Help Future Generations Prosper", and the convening of General Assembly thematic debates on this issue. We believe that outreach to the next generation on practices of peace and non-violence that are free from discrimination and bias would help young people to live in a world of peace and harmony.

Belarus, true to its principles and those of the United Nations, will further encourage international efforts to fully implement the Global Agenda for Dialogue among Civilizations.

Mr. Stone (Australia): Australia would like to thank the Secretary-General for his report on intercultural, interreligious and intercivilizational

understanding (A/65/269) and his note on the International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World (A/65/299), which we are considering here today. We strongly support the Secretary-General in his efforts to promote interreligious and intercultural dialogue and understanding, particularly through the Alliance of Civilizations. We would like to thank the High Representative for the Alliance of Civilizations, Mr. Jorge Sampaio, for his tireless efforts on behalf of the Alliance of Civilizations. We would also like to recognize Turkey and Spain for their work in co chairing the Group of Friends of the Alliance of Civilizations.

Australia is encouraged by the work of the Alliance of Civilizations to promote dialogue that delivers change on the ground. We need to confront the threat of cultural and religious division with concrete action. The training of journalists undertaken by the Alliance is one excellent example of such concrete action.

The Alliance of Civilizations complements the regional interfaith initiatives under way in our own Asia-Pacific region, such as the Regional Interfaith Dialogue held in Perth, Australia, in October last year, as well as the Parliament of the World's Religions held in Melbourne last December. Australia also provides extensive support to grass-roots interfaith activities in two of our nearest neighbours — Indonesia and the Philippines — that focus on helping non-governmental organizations on the ground increase understanding between Muslim and Christian communities. For example, since 2002 the Australia-Indonesia Institute's Muslim exchange programme has fostered contact between emerging leaders of the Muslim communities in Australia and Indonesia. The programme now has a community of more than 130 young leaders working to build links with other religious and ethnic groups.

Australia is a highly multicultural society and home to 200 nationalities and more than 100 religions. Today, one in four Australians was born overseas. On top of that, almost as many have at least one parent who was born overseas. Interfaith and intercultural respect and cooperation have not always come easily. Australia has had to learn hard lessons about how prejudice and distrust can be overcome. However, creative and practical programmes that engage youth and harness education at the local level can help us improve the dialogue between cultures and promote peace and understanding. Our role as Member States is to enable and encourage this dialogue, and the United Nations can play an important role as well.

Ms. Halabi (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): It gives me great pleasure to address the Assembly today on a very important topic that has been a central issue in major ideological and intellectual debates of recent years. I am referring to the culture of peace and the centrality of dialogue, understanding, cooperation and mutual respect among cultures and religions, as well as to the Alliance of Civilizations for peace in its true meaning and not that of slogans for peace.

It is well known that ideological dialogue is the basis for understanding between international communities and furnishes the elements of an ideological and human renaissance that humankind needs in order to achieve peace, justice and respect for values, wisely pave the way to international understanding, and elevate the common values of human culture.

At this stage in human history, our peoples are confronted not only by cultural misconceptions between the East and the West, but also by misunderstandings among civilizations affecting all parts of our world. It is a world suffering the absence of the values of freedom, justice and human rights and overwhelmed by the dangers of imbalance due to desperation, numerous forms of aggression and the launching of illegitimate wars, discrimination, racism and the suffering of vulnerable States in the harsh economic and financial crises impacting Africa, Asia and Latin America.

All of this has left many peoples of the world with problems and crises that are difficult to remedy. Therefore, the launching of awareness-raising dialogues among all civilizations, which forge and strengthen relationships, is of the utmost urgency. They are lifesaving measures that promote human contact, reinvigorate human civilizational memory, and discourage attacks on civilizations that foment discord among different peoples and races. They also foster diversity and interaction in the international march of civilization, which can transcend the logic of a fake clash.

We also find that the phenomenon of dialogue among civilizations is expanding and that institutions are being established for that purpose. We hope that

these institutions will ask questions that focus on relations among civilizations. Is it really a relationship of dialogue, or is it one of integration, where each civilization learns from its predecessors and then comes up with a new form that is considered to be an improvement, as happened when the Arab civilization carried its wealth of knowledge through Andalusia to Europe?

Since the civilization of today's advanced countries does not abandon this principle but rather builds on the achievements of previous civilizations, we can speak of civilizational integration, or rather of a civilizational alliance and an optimal dialogue that cannot be robbed of its content. This dialogue is aware of its roots and what the present owes to the past, and those concepts that are new and renewed deserve our respect because they seek to entrench the human connection to knowledge, which is a deep and honest conviction opposing ignorance and wrongful bias.

The establishment of bridges of understanding and cooperation among religions and cultures would bolster peace in the world, spread the culture of peace among societies, and diminish the gap of people's ignorance of each other. All of that would mitigate the prejudice and narrow-minded interpretations that ideological extremism tries to promote throughout the world, burdening them with political and ideological sabre-rattling.

The enlightened of the world must promote interreligious and intercultural dialogue and give priority to ideological understanding and respect for the identity of the other, as well as the need not to conflate religion and terrorism. We must also be aware that the absence of understanding and cooperation within the international community is partly the result of humans' misunderstanding of religions and cultures and ignorance of our common denominators. It is not due to structural shortcomings in these noble, moral concepts. Human history demonstrates that extremely beautiful forms of understanding and cooperation among cultures saw the light in ancient times, when military and ideological clashes were the norm.

In recent decades, the international community has witnessed violent forms of conflict and a lack of dialogue and mutual knowledge, although some like to boast of new modes of thought, such as globalization and the information and communications technology revolution. Our purpose is to make communication among civilizations a cultural norm that would introduce us to the world community and represent a pledge of honour to craft it into a message of amity, peace and justice and a call to all the nations of the world.

The race among civilizations must be a race for the greatness of human thought and human genius, because those are ambitions that transcend aggression. It must be a race for a world where there is no usurpation of rights, no occupation of the lands of others, no discrimination based on race or colour, and no injustices that befall people who are displaced from their lands and whose holy shrines are desecrated, as Israel has done to the Palestinian people and as the neo-Nazis are doing with our creeds, beliefs and the lives of our people.

Since 2010 has been proclaimed the International Year for the Rapprochement of Cultures, we must confront all these challenges in order to achieve a world that is more unified and more just; a world that is multicultural, with multiple nationalities, and where an open, democratic dialogue prevails and peoples exercise their natural right to sovereignty and self-determination in a climate of liberty, equality and human dignity.

Mr. Apakan (Turkey): It is a great honour for me to address this forum on intercultural, interreligious and intercivilizational dialogue to achieve a culture of peace. On this occasion, I would like to thank the President of the General Assembly, Mr. Joseph Deiss, for convening this meeting. We are convinced that our deliberations today will help to enhance collective peaceful coexistence and mutual understanding. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the Secretary-General for his report on the activities carried out by the main United Nations entities involved in the field of dialogue among civilizations, cultures and religions (A/65/269).

The reason behind the creation of this universal body was to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war. Today, we cherish the same ideals in a different world, where the driving forces of globalization threaten our common aspiration to peaceful coexistence. We live in an interconnected and interdependent world where global challenges have local impacts and local events impact the whole world.

Regrettably, we have so far failed to overcome polarization, lack of understanding and discrimination

in the international community. Today, stereotypes continue to shape our perception of the other — the other who has a different way of life, cultural values or religious beliefs; the other who indeed enriches our life. Our history reminds us that cultural ignorance and religious intolerance have been major obstacles to peace and development. It is therefore our responsibility to uphold mutual respect among religions and to promote a culture of tolerance and understanding among peoples. Indeed, a culture of peace can be enhanced only by the diversity of traditions and their peaceful cohabitation.

Today's discussion demonstrates that the nations of the world recognize the importance of their collective responsibility to promote a culture of peace. As we approach the end of the International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-violence for the Children of the World, we note with satisfaction that there is a growing interest in the promotion of cultural diversity. We recognize the important role played by UNESCO and other United Nations entities in the promotion of the Year. We believe that activities organized within this framework clearly show that diversity enriches humankind and is a source of creativity and innovation.

Diversity and dialogue have always been the central pillars of the Turkish historical and cultural heritage. Indeed over the centuries, Turkey has historically, geographically and socially bridged many different cultures and tried to create an environment of peace and mutual understanding. This was precisely the reason why, together with Spain, Turkey sponsored the Alliance of Civilizations initiative. The initiative, which was launched by the Prime Ministers of Turkey and Spain in 2005 under the auspices of the Secretary-General, enjoys the support of a growing number of Member States and international organizations. Such wide recognition and support make us all the more hopeful for our future.

To promote an alliance of civilizations requires first and foremost a sense of creativity to attract the attention of various stakeholders. Since its inception, the Alliance of Civilizations has provided a creative approach to engaging various stakeholders in dialogue and has become a sound platform to connect different cultures, to bridge the gaps of understanding and to amplify voices of moderation. Today, it has become a truly global peace initiative and serves as a global facilitator to promote sustainable dialogue among various stakeholders, including young people, women, parliamentarians, the media, civil society and the private sector. On this occasion, I would like to express our thanks to the Secretary-General for his engagement in the activities of the Alliance. I would also like to praise High Representative Sampaio for his tireless efforts.

This year in May, we completed a very successful Forum in Rio de Janeiro. The Forum was an inclusive platform that brought together the knowledge, experience and energy of a wide range of partners. It consolidated the global scope and universal outreach of the Alliance. We will now turn our energy to the next Forum, to be held in December 2011 in Qatar.

Indeed, misperceptions and lack of understanding continue to be the realities of today. A recent report released by the Anna Lindh Foundation, entitled "EuroMed Intercultural Trends 2010: The Anna Lindh Report", highlights that people living in Europe and the southern and eastern Mediterranean currently face a clash of ignorance. The survey's main findings show that one in every four persons from the two sides of the Mediterranean had met people from other countries within the region, and yet there were still profound disparities between what each group perceives as the other's values.

Against this alarming background, the Alliance of Civilizations, together with its partners, is working on a regional strategy for the Mediterranean that aims to bring all relevant stakeholders closer together, enhance human development and foster good-neighbourly relations among societies, institutions and individuals in the region. The strategy and its action plan for 2011-2015 will be adopted at the first Regional Conference for the Mediterranean, which will be held on 9 November in Malta. I would like to extend our sincere appreciation to the Government of Malta for hosting this important Conference. We only hope that the regional strategy will help all sectors of society in the Mediterranean region to interact and to promote the culture of peace together.

Cultures are not self-contained; they evolve through constant dialogue and exchange. As long as we value cultural diversity as a common heritage of humankind, we can attain the quest for social peace and harmony. For that reason, the key to a global culture of peace is dialogue. We must therefore continue our efforts to achieve a world whose richness lies at the centre of its own diversity.

Mr. Yáñez-Barnuevo (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): In 1998, the General Assembly proclaimed the decade 2001–2010 the International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-violence for the Children of the World. The Assembly's declaration of 2010 as the International Year for the Rapprochement of Cultures, made at the initiative of the General Conference of UNESCO, was to be the culmination of the Decade.

As we approach the end of the Decade, we can make a moderately positive assessment of the progress made by the international community — including States, international organizations and civil society — in promoting a culture of peace, despite all the difficulties and challenges that have arisen in the world throughout that period.

The reports being considered by the General Assembly today account for this well. The report of the Secretary-General contained in document A/65/299 indicates that the International Decade has succeeded in disseminating the concept of a culture of peace at various levels and in various sectors of society and has encouraged the adoption of specific measures to that end. However, it also states that

> "[t]he debate about peace, culture, tolerance, mutual respect, reconciliation and equity in our societies must be reopened and the power of ideas set free so as to arrive at a peace paradigm in a globalized world" (*A/65/299, para. 1*).

A similar conclusion is reached in the 2010 *World Report on the Culture of Peace*, which was prepared by the Foundation Culture of Peace based in Barcelona, with contributions from over 1,000 civil society organizations and from 100 countries throughout the world, and was conveyed to the Secretary-General in accordance with the provisions of resolution 64/80 and distributed to Member States by the Permanent Mission of Bangladesh.

The initiative of the Alliance of Civilizations, which has been led by the Secretary-General since 2005 and was sponsored by Spain and Turkey, has attempted ever since its creation to respond to the challenges posed by diversity and coexistence at the national and international levels. To that end, the ultimate aim of the Alliance is to promote understanding and cooperation among nations and peoples of different cultures and religions, and to counteract the forces that fuel extremism and endanger peace. All of this is based on shared universal values that inspire and guide the actions and spirit of the Alliance of Civilizations and are enshrined in the United Nations Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, among other basic instruments of international law.

I am pleased to recall that, around this same time this past year, the General Assembly adopted by consensus resolution 64/14, sponsored by 94 States, on the Alliance of Civilizations, demonstrating the broad political support enjoyed by the initiative. I note that the large Group of Friends of the Alliance already numbers 128 members, including States and international organizations alike. The designation of focal points by the members of the Group has allowed the Alliance to work dynamically and with a focus on action. The meeting of Alliance focal points, scheduled for the end of October in Berlin, will be a good opportunity to assess what has been achieved to date and to set new goals for the near future.

Document A/65/349 contains the report recently submitted to the Secretary-General by his High Representative for the Alliance of Civilizations, Mr. Jorge Sampaio, and which the Secretary-General has in turn transmitted to the General Assembly. The report includes a summary of the main activities of the Alliance over the past year. As the Secretary-General points out in his introductory letter to the report,

> "In an increasingly interconnected world, often divided by cross-cultural tensions, the Alliance can play a significant role, as a bridge-builder and as a catalyst for ... efforts aimed at furthering trust and cooperation among diverse cultures" (*A/65/349, p. 1*).

In that regard, developing the regional dimension of the Alliance of Civilizations is of great importance. The adoption of regional strategies — beginning in South-East Europe last year at Sarajevo and to be followed in the Mediterranean by the conference to be held in Malta in November — is crucial to translating the Alliance's global objectives into concrete efforts tailored to the circumstances and realities of each region. The next step will be to craft those agreements into real projects that will be determined by action plans and require sustained political and financial support.

For its part, Spain continues to be fully committed to the principles and values of the Alliance of Civilizations and its special focus on action and

achieving results. In the course of Spain's term of office in the rotating chairmanship of the European Union in the first half of this year, the Alliance held a round table on the theme "The Alliance of Civilizations and city diplomacy initiatives", in the context of the European Summit of Local Governments held in Barcelona in February 2010.

I should also like to point out the high-level meeting held in Cordoba in May on the theme "Religious freedom in democratic societies", whose main goal was to develop article 17 of the European Union's operational Treaty, which sets out that the Union will maintain open, transparent and regular dialogue with churches and religious and other types of groups and organizations.

I am also pleased to inform the Assembly of the upcoming inauguration of the United Nations University International Institute for the Alliance of Civilizations, which will be based in Barcelona and serve as a meeting place and an ideal laboratory for undertaking the necessary task of developing and seeking the most effective ways of achieving the Alliance's goals.

Lastly, I should like to refer to the report of the Secretary-General on intercultural, interreligious and intercivilizational dialogue (A/65/269). Among other things, the report refers to ongoing activities in connection with the 2010 International Year for the Rapprochement of Cultures. The main goal is to demonstrate that diversity enriches humankind and is a source of creativity and innovation. In addition to some of the efforts carried out by the Alliance of Civilizations, the report covers the broad array of projects and actions undertaken by UNESCO, especially in the area of education, to promote dialogue and understanding among cultures, thereby demonstrating its complementarity with the Alliance of Civilizations. The recent renewal of the memorandum of understanding between UNESCO and the Alliance of Civilizations on the occasion of the Alliance's third Forum, held in Rio de Janeiro, has made it possible to broaden cooperation between the two bodies.

The International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-violence for the Children of the World is coming to an end. There is no doubt that the Decade, which began in 2001 with the signing of a manifesto by 75 million people who committed themselves to working to promote the culture of peace in their daily lives, has achieved significant progress in promoting the culture of peace throughout the world, notwithstanding obstacles and difficulties.

However, reality shows that, despite the progress made, there is still much to do and many obstacles to overcome. The fact that the International Decade is coming to an end should not lead us to relax our commitment to promoting a genuine culture of peace throughout the world. The Alliance of Civilizations has proven to be a particularly useful tool for generating dialogue and understanding and for meeting the challenges of our times. The holding of the fourth Forum of the Alliance of Civilizations in Doha, Qatar, in late 2011 will provide us with new prospects to continue to work intensively and in a committed manner to promote a culture of peace that can genuinely and effectively overcome various perceptions through joint efforts in favour of our common humanity.

Mr. Valero Briceño (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): We would like to thank you, Madam, for leading our work, and to wish you continued success.

The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela welcomes the many initiatives carried out worldwide to promote dialogue among civilizations.

In recent days, the streets of New York have been the scene of a fiery protest against the building of an Islamic cultural centre near the so called Ground Zero. According to national and international press agencies, opponents of the project shouted "No mosque under any circumstances". Some carried banners with the word "sharia" written in red paint to symbolize traces of blood.

In September, a preacher threatened to burn a Holy Koran at a public ceremony. In addition, an Islamic centre in California was besieged with signs that read "Wake up America, the enemy is here" and "We do not want temples of the terrorist God near Ground Zero". In Nashville, Tennessee, a mosque under construction was set on fire.

Ten years after the unfortunate attacks of 11 September, anti-Muslim sentiment is on the rise in the United States and Europe. Racist and xenophobic political leaders of the Tea Party of the United States accuse Muslims of worshiping — and I quote the *New York Daily News* — "the monkey god of the terrorists".

On Sunday, 10 October 2010, *The New York Times* published a lengthy article in which it highlighted that there is, in the United States, a strong nucleus of people and organizations, whose influence is expanding, promoting "a spreading fear of Islam and a dehumanization of Muslims".

The renowned Canadian academic economist Michel Chossudovsky, in his article entitled "The Demonization of Muslims and the Battle for Oil", said:

> "Demonization is applied to an enemy which possesses three quarters of the world's oil reserves. 'Axis of evil', 'rogue States', 'failed nations', 'Islamic terrorists': demonization and vilification are the ideological pillars of America's 'war on terror'. They serve as a casus belli for waging the battle for oil.
>
> "The Battle for Oil requires the demonization of those who possess the oil. The enemy is characterized as evil, with a view to justifying military action including the mass killing of civilians."

One of the worst consequences of the events of 11 September 2001 has been a noticeable increase in intolerance. Some, deplorably, associate terrorism with that which is Arab, with that which is Muslim, with Islam. They are employing a false dichotomy: East versus West. Neoconservative political scientist Samuel Huntington predicted that, after the demise of the cold war, "the clash of civilizations will dominate global politics".

We believe that those prejudices are divorced from reality. Neither in the East nor in the West is political or religious fundamentalism the hallmark of civilization. Reductionism of this kind underestimates the internal dynamics and plurality of each civilization.

The Islamic world is rich in history and culture, as well as being geographically diverse. It is a community of approximately 1.6 billion believers, of which 320 million are Arabs. This includes approximately 57 countries, of which 22 are Arab, one is Persian, 13 are part of sub-Saharan Africa, seven are Asian from the Indo Pacific region, three are European and seven are Islamic republics of the former Soviet Union. This constellation of countries, in its political, social and cultural specificities, hosts a richness of diversity and cultural plurality that give rise to freedom and sovereignty.

Human beings are enriched by diversity and, within it, achieve social wholeness. Plurality is the expression of a rich rainbow of options, and it enhances freedom and equality. The rich splendour of the human species reaches fruition in constructive fellowship with trillions of other organisms, including the ecosystem.

Dreams are part of reality, as they inspire our struggles for existence and for the preservation of humanity. The dreams may not look the same, but their paths may cross along the way and they will then recognize themselves in each other.

While violence, racism and xenophobia represent the absolute negation of dialogue, dialogue opens avenues of understanding and is one of the conditions for peaceful coexistence between nations and peoples. Dialogue means tolerance and respect for others. But this does not mean dialogue just for the sake of dialogue. Rather, it should be a journey, an opportunity to build a society based on justice, equity, equality, freedom and solidarity. Dialogue, which does not exclude debate and differences, is essential to achieving peace and to ensuring human dignity.

Inciting hatred and discrimination is a crime. The American Convention on Human Rights states in article 13 that:

> "Any propaganda for war and any advocacy of national, racial, or religious hatred that constitute incitements to lawless violence or to any other similar action against any person or group of persons on any grounds including those of race, color, religion, language, or national origin shall be considered as offenses punishable by law."

For its part, the Durban Programme of Action of the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, which was held in Durban, South Africa:

> "Calls upon States, in opposing all forms of racism, to recognize the need to counter anti-Semitism, anti-Arabism and Islamophobia worldwide, and urges all States to take effective measures to prevent the emergence of movements based on racism and discriminatory ideas concerning these communities" (*A/CONF.189/12, Programme of Action, para. 150*).

I conclude with this question: what are we, at the United Nations, doing to prevent the continued increase in those heinous forms of discrimination against human beings, cultures and civilizations?

Mr. Borg (Malta): The two agenda items that the Assembly is considering in this plenary meeting, namely, "Global Agenda for Dialogue among Civilizations" and "Culture of peace", are mutually inclusive and complementary to each other. Let me take this opportunity to thank and congratulate the High Representative for the Alliance of Civilizations, former President Sampaio, for his outstanding leadership and tenacity in maintaining the Alliance momentum, attracting new members and building consensus among its constituency and in delivering on some of its objectives.

Malta believes that dialogue among cultures and civilizations is essential for a better future — irrespective of our origins or beliefs — and is an important tool in strengthening dialogue and a means for cooperation between and among countries of the Group of Friends of the Alliance.

In my statement, I would like to focus on how Malta is contributing towards the enhancement of the dialogue among civilizations in its own region, the Mediterranean.

It is recognized that the Mediterranean represents a unique experience of similarities, common history and overlapping cultures, which contributes to the objectives of the Alliance of Civilizations, namely, to counter divisions, polarization and extremism within and among societies.

With recurrent tensions threatening peace and security in the Mediterranean region and beyond, it is important that all stakeholders continue to strengthen the global scope of the Alliance, which, as rightly pointed out by Secretary-General Ban Ki moon, is the leading United Nations forum dealing with intercultural dialogue and cooperation.

The people-to-people approach must continue to guide our endeavours, especially those aimed at strengthening on-the-ground efforts and cooperation with a view to sowing the seeds of reconciliation and understanding.

In three weeks' time, from 8 to 9 November, Malta will be hosting the first Alliance of Civilizations regional conference for the Mediterranean. As an active member of the Alliance of Civilizations Group of Friends, Malta intends to ensure that this conference's outcome will provide another feather in the cap of the Alliance, especially through the enhancement of good governance, cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue among and between Mediterranean States.

Indeed, this first regional conference for the Mediterranean will see the adoption of the first regional strategy for the Mediterranean and an action plan, paving the way for innovative projects and initiatives aimed at strengthening intercultural dialogue and cooperation.

The primary aims of the strategy are to contribute to the general ongoing efforts to bring relevant cultural, economic, social and political stakeholders together from both sides of the Mediterranean, promote mutual understanding and improve perceptions of each other. It will also seek to defuse tensions and bridge divides, enhance security and human development, and foster good-neighbourly relations among societies, institutions and individuals in the Mediterranean region.

The first regional conference for the Mediterranean will provide a platform for open and frank exchanges between and among representatives of the Mediterranean region with the hope that it will hopefully leave an indelible mark in the Alliance's intercultural dialogue process.

Malta's commitment to intercultural dialogue in the Mediterranean has been continuous. It has been a long-standing vocation since Malta joined this family of nations. Indeed, Malta has not missed an opportunity to contribute further to this dialogue of partners.

In that regard, Malta also plays an active role in the Union for the Mediterranean. Firm in the belief that dialogue and cooperation contribute significantly to the stability and security of the Euro-Mediterranean region, Malta has, since the inception of the Euro-Mediterranean dialogue, held that the centrality of the objectives of the Union remains crucial in any successful achievement of this novel partnership.

Malta is proud and honoured to have nominated a Deputy Secretary-General for the conference, and to have been entrusted with the portfolio covering social and civil affairs, an area undoubtedly of vital interest

to all partners in the Union and which will serve to further dialogue in the Mediterranean.

Malta is also pleased to be the seat of the headquarters of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean, which brings together the parliaments of all countries bordering the Mediterranean. The Assembly was established to bring together all the littoral States of the Mediterranean on an equal footing in a unique forum of their own, to examine questions and take decisions on issues of direct interest to the countries of the region.

The primary mission of the Assembly is to bring the people's representatives of the Mediterranean together to promote cooperation, dialogue and mutual understanding. In that regard, it was a privilege for my delegation to have been the sponsor, together with the delegation of France, of resolution 64/124 of this General Assembly, which was adopted in December 2009, granting observer status to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean to participate in the sessions and the work of the General Assembly.

The fifth plenary session of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean, to be held in 10 days' time from 28 to 30 October 2010 in Rabat, Morocco, will be yet another occasion when parliamentarians from the Mediterranean littoral States will once again engage in sharing of initiatives, ideas, proposals and solutions in the continuous search for an intercultural parliamentary diplomacy in order to establish durable peace and sustainable prosperity for all citizens of the Mediterranean.

Malta strongly believes that we, as United Nations Member States and proud of our history and heritage, can and should strengthen our political will to consolidate that which we have achieved so far and unite our efforts so as to engage collectively and constructively in the promotion of a fruitful dialogue between and among partners from different regions.

Malta's vocation is to continue to strive to stem prejudices and overcome obstacles that hinder and jeopardize the harmonious interaction between peoples of diverse sociocultural backgrounds and religious beliefs. The bridge we are building should be based on solid pillars of mutual understanding and respect. In achieving that goal, a concerted effort is required in a process that enjoys sufficient visibility to win both the minds and hearts of our peoples.

Mr. Ali (Sudan) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, please allow me to express my delegation's appreciation for the inclusion of these two agenda items in our programme of work this year. The topics of the Global Agenda for Dialogue among Civilization and the Culture of Peace are very important given the Assembly's broad responsibility for promoting a culture of peace and consolidating the principles of dialogue and coexistence.

The recent incidents of clashes and confrontation around the world make our discussion on dialogue among civilizations aimed at consolidating the values of peace and coexistence quite significant. In that regard, we note many initiatives whose recommendations we hope will be implemented. We would also like to note, in particular, the initiatives of the Non-Aligned Movement leaders at a meeting held in Manila, Philippines, last March.

That accomplishment was the result of persistent efforts by many countries, including Egypt, Indonesia, Iran, Morocco, Pakistan, Qatar and Senegal and the Sudan. In this context, I should like to recall the High-level Meeting of the General Assembly held in November 2008 in New York at the initiative of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz Al Saud. That meeting was part of a process, started in Mecca and continued in Madrid, which aimed at translating the same noble goals we are discussing today into tangible reality.

We would like to underscore the importance of efforts made in the past few years in various relevant forums. They have been an expression of our people's determination to embrace dialogue among civilizations as a cornerstone of cooperation and coexistence. At the same time, such efforts are an expression of our people's rejection of the notion of the clash of civilizations and cultures, as advocated by certain misguided voices.

We in the Sudan believe that people were created as different races, tribes, ethnicities, colours and languages in order to cooperate, interact and exchange for our greater good. We therefore strongly reject and condemn practices that have recently emerged of defiling religious symbols. We also reject supremacist claims and recent forums for the desecration of religious symbols, venerated persons and holy books under the slogan of the freedom of expression. We refuse to accept such a justification for such behaviour.

Globalization has offered the world great mechanisms and possibilities for communication, but these can be used to negative ends if we, as countries, governmental organizations and civil society organizations, do not promote an international understanding that enhances mutual respect and promotes a culture of peace and dialogue, so that we are able to build bridges instead of walls.

To that end, we call upon the international community and those in favour of dialogue to support the activities and efforts of the Alliance of Civilizations. We would like to note that the United Nations High Representative for the Alliance of Civilizations has stated that the Alliance is being hindered by a shortfall in resources, which in turn impedes the implementation of the goals set by the Assembly in many resolutions.

The wise leadership of the patriotic sons of the Sudan managed to bring to an end the longest civil war in Africa since the end of the colonial period, which our people inherited, one generation after another. That success was crowned with the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement in 2005, which entrenches the principles of peace and dialogue among the people of the Sudan. The coming months will see the final chapter of the implementation of the Agreement with the exercise of the right of the people of Southern Sudan to self-determination. In that context, my Government is committed to allowing that process to happen in a democratic and transparent manner, giving every citizen the right to express his or her opinion, freely and fairly.

My country will also continue its efforts to negotiate with the Darfur rebels in Doha under the auspices of His Highness Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa, the Emir of Qatar. In that regard, we urge the international community to call upon the Darfur leaders who refuse to join the negotiation in Doha, to do so and thus to work for peace. We also urge in particular those countries that are hosting rebel leaders to insist on the urgent need for them to join the negotiations.

The topic of the culture of peace has become the subject of media attention and has received the praise of writers and poets, becoming part of our school, college and educational curricula. We have established centres to conduct research and studies on issues of peace and dialogue aimed at serving our people, our neighbours and the rest of the world.

Achieving a culture of peace and dialogue among civilizations cannot be separated from the Millennium Development Goals, which aim to promote dialogue between the North and the South and between the most developed and the least developed countries. That would undoubtedly help overcome national, regional and international conflicts, and would defeat the pretexts of those who deny others on the grounds of race, religion, culture and civilization.

This drive in favour of peace and dialogue should be supported by cooperative efforts among all leaders and youth gatherings in order to promote mutual understanding and a culture that our children would learn from and believe in.

We must be guided by the tolerance that is part of our faith to remain true to the message of worldwide peace, for which all religions, cultures and civilizations yearn, based on the values of peace, tolerance and coexistence. In that context, my delegation welcomes the conference to be held in Doha, Qatar, in late 2011.

Mr. Nickels (United States of America): The United States is grateful for the opportunity to speak on the important agenda items encompassed by the culture of peace.

2010 is the final year of the International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-violence for the Children of the World. We commend the work that UNESCO, UNICEF and other United Nations organizations have done throughout this Decade.

The United States supports efforts around the world aimed at creating forums where people with differing views can express themselves through dialogue. That is why we joined the Alliance of Civilizations and why we support initiatives like Jordan's draft resolution this year on a week of interfaith harmony (A/65/L.5).

The United States believes that peace can be achieved when peoples, religions and races come together to understand and accept one another, and to shun the violence and hatred borne of intolerance. Fostering religious and cultural diversity and affirming mutual understanding are the cornerstones of a true and lasting peace. The United States affirms unequivocally that freedom of expression and open intercultural and

interreligious dialogue are critical to combating intolerance and to promoting peaceful coexistence.

Though the decade for a culture of peace is drawing to a close, we look forward to the next decade with its continued opportunities for dialogue. As President Obama said in his speech in Cairo in 2009:

> "All of us share this world for but a brief moment in time. The question is whether we spend that time focused on what pushes us apart, or whether we commit ourselves to an effort — a sustained effort — to find common ground, to focus on the future we seek for our children, and to respect the dignity of all human beings."

Mr. Dwivedi (India): I am deeply honoured and privileged to participate in today's joint debate on the agenda items "Global Agenda for Dialogue among Civilizations" and "Culture of peace".

As the International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-violence for the Children of the World comes to an end, and we celebrate the International Year of Rapprochement of Cultures in 2010, we have the opportunity to take a holistic view of the progress made so far and to assess the challenges that lie ahead.

Please allow me to express our sincere thanks and appreciation to the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report on intercultural, interreligious and intercivilizational dialogue (A/65/269) and to the Director-General of UNESCO for its report entitled "International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-violence for the Children of the World, 2001-2010" (A/65/299).

In today's world we are witnessing the rise of extremism and intolerance, outbreaks of sectarian violence and the increasing use of the language of hatred and violence. These pose a serious challenge to the very foundations of our society. The increasing interdependence and interconnectedness of our world have also perhaps accentuated the fault lines in our society. While there is an accelerated pace in economic and technological development, the same, regrettably, cannot be said with regard to ethical, moral and cultural development in our society. Indeed, our times have seen the rise of the scourge of terrorism.

The environment in which we live today is also accentuated by disparities, deprivation and exploitation. That is hardly conducive to laying the foundations for sustainable peace and development. Conscious of that stark reality, our former Prime Minister Shrimati Indira Gandhi noted as early as 1972, at the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, that poverty and need were the worst polluters. That stirred a global debate on the need to ensure that poverty eradication and developmental imperatives remained at the fore along with environmental challenges in our pursuit of sustainable development.

Intercultural and interreligious dialogue is a necessity and one of the central elements in developing a better understanding of the apparent contradictions and divergent approaches that exist today in our societies. We need to create an environment conducive to fostering dialogue among diverse cultures, races, faiths and religions and that inculcates the values that promote a transition from force to reason and from conflict and violence to dialogue and peace.

Dialogue among different cultures and religions is also important because it is precisely in the absence of such dialogue and understanding that intolerance, bigotry and violence flourish. That is why extremist ideologies, violence and terrorism have grown in a world in which we seem to be moving away from dialogue and understanding. There can be no disputing that terrorism, which is a manifestation of extremism, intolerance and violence, is the antithesis of all religions. No religion condones violence or the killing of human beings. It is therefore imperative that the nations of the world work together in a concerted manner to tackle the menace of terrorism and extremism, which are anathema to modern societies.

All the great religions of the world essentially represent what the Indian ethos postulates, that is, "the truth is one, the wise call it by many names". Compassion, mercy and tolerance are the common values and beliefs among all major faiths of the world. We must learn to live our faith with integrity while respecting and accepting each other.

India, the largest democracy in the world, a nation of unparalleled diversity with a population of over 1 billion, is the second most populous country in the world. While India of course has the largest Hindu population, we also have one of the largest Muslim populations in the world. India provides a home to a very significant number of practitioners of practically every other major religion of the world, be it Christianity, Buddhism, Sikhism, Jainism,

Zoroastrianism or the Baja's. India is the birthplace of Jainism. Gateman Buddha gave his first sermon in Senath, an eminent centre of Indian philosophy, after he attained enlightenment in Both Gaye.

The history of India, in essence, is a narrative of conversations among different civilizations and, indeed, conversation with nature itself. India is home to scores of languages, hundreds of dialects, thousands of cuisines and a medley of races, colours, landscapes and cultures. This assimilation and accommodation of diversity have contributed to the richness of our composite culture and the durability of our civilization. Our civilizational legacy treats nature as a source of nurturing and places high value on living in harmony with nature. The Vedas are a repository for the holistic development of the human being in full harmony with its surroundings.

The principle that the entire world is one family has run like a thread through our constant interaction and exchange of thoughts with the outside world. The noble principles of life and spiritualism, including non-violence, have influenced successive generations of people worldwide. The interaction between India and the West goes back to the time of ancient Greece. Millenniums ago, the interaction between those two civilizations produced the exquisite Andhra art form. India's contact with Islam produced the beautiful confluence of the Indo Islamic culture, which includes the great human values of Sufism. Indeed, India would not have succeeded in holding together and strengthening a composite Indian identity unless Indians practised tolerance and were determined to live together in peace.

The father of our nation, Mahatma Gandhi, was the greatest apostle of peace and non-violence. We firmly believe that Gandhi is not the past, he is the future also. He said,

> "I do not want my house to be walled in on all sides and my windows to be stuffed. I want the cultures of all the lands to be blown about my house as freely as possible".

We believe that no culture or religion is superior to any other, and have always benefited from our interactions with various civilizations throughout our history. We in India understand the importance of building alliances among religions, cultures and ethnic groups. We have always supported all efforts to build bridges of understanding among nations, peoples, religions and cultures across the world. It is our considered view that successful pluralism must be grounded on the basic tenets of mutual understanding and respect for diverse traditions. Those are also critical for the harmonious development of all sectors of society, including when it comes to gender equity and the empowerment of women all over the world.

Global efforts towards peace and reconciliation can only succeed with a collective approach that is built on commitment, trust, dialogue and collaboration. We must do this at all levels: within nations, within regions and within the broader international community. The only way to achieve this goal is to move conceptually to a new dimension of dialogue and harmony among diverse cultures, races, faiths and religions so that all human beings can live in the sane and peaceful global society of our collective dreams.

Mr. Jamaal (Tunisia) (*spoke in French*): The future of security, stability and development in the world is contingent on reverence for the principles of mutual understanding and tolerance among peoples. Establishing an international partnership for dialogue, cooperation, peace and development that promotes communication between all nations around the world regardless of colour, race, religion or language is certainly crucial for achieving peace and security.

We must recall that the darkest chapters of humankind's history and the worst atrocities committed against humanity essentially have as their source doctrines of racial superiority and dogmas positing civilizational or cultural superiority. Such notions have lost sight of the truth that a man remains a man, whether he has white, black or yellow skin and whether he is Muslim, Jewish or Christian. They have also lost sight of the fact that human civilization is a shared outcome drawing upon various sources and growing and prospering due to contributions from the East and the West, the North and the South. Human culture itself has multiple origins and colours and has developed and grown thanks to the linguistic, literary, intellectual and artistic creations of peoples from all continents.

The dialogue that Tunisia wishes to see and wants to enshrine in international relations can be successful only to the extent that each of us, whether in the East or the West, works to initiate a culture of dialogue, tolerance and human rights — above all in our own countries. We must do so through educational and teaching programmes as well as grass-roots activities

and information and communications programmes, in particular with youth and women, in order to anchor this culture in human relations and make it an unwavering conviction in our thinking and in the behaviour of all human societies.

This is what Tunisia has undertaken to do, since the start of the 1990s, by readjusting to that end its educational and teaching programmes. We have established a world solidarity award and a world prize for Islamic studies advocating moderation, the golden mean and enlightened thinking. We have also hosted many meetings and regional and international conferences focused on the dialogue of civilizations and international solidarity, which gave rise to a very worthwhile series of agreements and appeals to that end.

We must also, in this context, work to combat the phenomena of poverty, illiteracy, disease, unemployment, isolation and marginalization, and do so with all of the determination and perseverance that we are capable of in order to find remedies to these phenomena and to eradicate their root causes, taking into account each country's resources and situation.

Based on the firm belief that these phenomena are a major handicap today for developing countries that prevent them from developing their own potential so that they can achieve progress and do away with their vulnerability, President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali made an appeal, in 1999, to create a World Solidarity Fund aimed at eradicating disparities and strengthening solidarity among peoples. That proposal was welcomed by the United Nations.

Another Tunisian initiative that calls for establishing bonds of friendship, cooperation and mutual esteem among peoples regardless of race, culture or faith is the Ben Ali Chair for Dialogue of Civilizations and Religions. Established in 2001, this post is aimed at increasing and spreading knowledge. Its key role is to encourage knowledge of other civilizations and religions. It encourages and provides material and moral support for actions that advocate rapprochement among peoples.

Respect for the identity and uniqueness of peoples is the best framework for establishing a balanced dialogue among equals between civilizations, cultures and religions. Cultural difference, because of the variety of contributions made to it and its great breadth, is indispensable for enriching human civilization. However, difference should not be used to justify any type of rejection or exclusion. Instead, it should offer broad horizons for diversity and enrichment.

Tunisia reiterates from this rostrum its determination and its goodwill to cooperate with the entire international community to bring about a world of peace, security and prosperity.

Mrs. Chaimongkol (Thailand): Less than three weeks ago, our leaders reaffirmed their commitment to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. Indeed, without respect and understanding for each other, sustainable peace and development cannot be achieved.

Thailand supports every effort that aims to promote greater understanding and expand dialogue among cultures, religions and civilizations. In this regard, Thailand takes note of the report of the Secretary-General (A/65/269), which highlights the activities carried out within the framework of the Alliance of Civilizations and provides an overview of other major regional and global initiatives taken in this area. Thailand supports the recommendation of the report that the work on dialogue among cultures, religions and civilizations be streamlined in the future in order to make global efforts in this area more coherent, visible and easily understandable for the public and non-United Nations actors.

I would like to share some of Thailand's views.

First, as my Foreign Minister said during the general debate (see A/65/PV.23), we live in a world of divides, be they politico-security, socio economic, digital or even based on beliefs. To overcome them, we need concerted efforts. The Alliance of Civilizations can be a useful tool for bridging these divides. It should also cooperate with related United Nations agencies, regional organizations and relevant interfaith dialogue frameworks, such as the Special Non-Aligned Movement Ministerial Meeting on Interfaith Dialogue and Cooperation for Peace and Development and the Tripartite Forum on Interfaith Cooperation for Peace, in order to foster understanding and prevent confrontation.

Secondly, human rights are a top priority for the Thai Government and its foreign policy. While fundamental human rights are universal, dialogue among cultures, religions and civilizations can help to

promote these values, bridge the gaps between different interpretations and standards and enhance the effectiveness of their implementation across cultures and boundaries. Such forums as interfaith dialogues and the Alliance of Civilizations can make invaluable contributions to fostering common understanding.

Thirdly, at the regional level, Thailand has been active in promoting closer interaction and greater understanding between peoples in South-East Asia by enhancing the connectivity of regional infrastructure. Through various initiatives, such as the Master Plan on Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Connectivity, the Initiative for ASEAN Integration Strategic Framework, the East-West Economic Corridor, the Greater Mekong subregion projects, as well as other bilateral initiatives, the free flow of goods, services, and people brings with it a greater understanding of different cultures, religions and beliefs.

Thailand stands ready to work closely with the General Assembly, United Nations bodies and all parties concerned to foster intercultural and interreligious cooperation.

Mr. Balé (Congo) (*spoke in French*): The founding concept of the United Nations was the quest for peace and the practice of tolerance, the prohibition of the use of weapons and the promotion of economic and social development for all peoples so that one of the greatest tragedies humankind had ever seen would never again recur. Most particularly, it was to protect future generations from the scourge of war.

I would like here to acknowledge the timeliness and relevance of the subject under consideration today, 10 years after the proclamation of the International Year for the Culture of Peace, and particularly this year, 2010, which marks the end of the International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-violence for the Children of the World.

Recent history following the World Wars is so replete with bloody events and upheavals — indeed, as many today as in the past — that violence continues to permeate our world. Intolerance and scorn for each other's cultures lays the groundwork for extremism. Racism, xenophobia and scorn for other cultures continue to feed off of racial and cultural prejudices. The mix of various crises — the economic, financial, social and food crises — alongside the negative effects of climate change and poverty, only worsens this negative trend, further exposing the weakest, most vulnerable and poorest.

My delegation would like to take this opportunity to express from this rostrum the Congo's support for all initiatives aimed at promoting the culture of peace and encouraging dialogue among cultures and civilizations. Dialogue among civilizations and its other facet, interfaith dialogue, clearly draw from the aims and principles of the United Nations. That is why the Congo once again welcomes this new sign of the times and hopes that this dialogue among civilizations that we hope for is indeed the path that will lead us towards the peaceful, just and prosperous world to which we all aspire.

My country recently joined the Group of Friends of the Alliance of Civilizations, thus reflecting the commitment of the Congolese Government to actively take part, together with other members of the international community, in this quest for peace and tolerance through a dialogue among civilizations. Today's debate offers a platform for all civilizations and cultures and all religions to undertake joint initiatives and partnerships at the various levels in our States, individually or collectively and within our respective societies, so that the virtues of dialogue, tolerance and respect for cultural diversity serve the cause of peace and development.

In this context, I would like to recall the virtues enshrined by the African tradition of discussion, which also provides an opportunity for dialogue in the quest for peaceful and consensus-based solutions to disputes that arise in society. African discussions involve reconciling opposing views and forging an awareness of a shared destiny.

Religions, in principle, advocate tolerance and love for one's neighbour. But throughout their history, and today once again, they have led and at times still lead to violence and intolerance when they are carried along on the currents of extremism. We believe that now is the time to encourage meetings between the different faiths, in order to develop, in a non-denominational spirit, a dialogue that is oriented towards peace. Such opportunities should allow all of them to explain in more depth the doctrine of their particular religious community and more clearly illustrate its characteristics. This constructive dialogue should bring about a growing mutual awareness of each faith along with a greater esteem of the teachings

that they convey. Religious communities would thereby cooperate more broadly in all undertakings that, depending on the requirements of the various parties, contribute to the achievement of the shared goals of peace and development.

His Excellency Mr. Denis Sassou Nguesso, President of the Republic of the Congo, has made peace based on dialogue his political credo. It is through the virtues of dialogue and tolerance that the Congo has been able to overcome the obstacles that were put in its path by an unprecedented civil war and has been able to restore peace. In the wake of the fratricidal violence that plunged the country into grieving and destroyed its social and economic fabric between 1997 and 1999, non-denominational services were successfully held. Thus prayers and pleas uttered with a single heart and in unison contributed, with other vital forces in the country, to overcoming the divisions that could still plunge the country into further turmoil. The Government understood the beneficial impact of this effort, as did religious communities. Therefore all religious faiths, separate from the State but placed on the same footing, underteok this common cause of peace, which is a prerequisite for development.

It is therefore obvious, in this respect, that we should encourage a complementary dynamic between, on the one hand, the State in its governing role as the guarantor of peace and security and, on the other hand, the religious faiths involved in an interfaith dialogue devoted to winning over hearts and minds, with the noble aim of promoting a true culture of peace. Conversion is, we know, one of the principles that underpins religion.

We are at a symbolic turning point at the end of this first decade devoted to the culture of peace. Yet peace can only prosper and last if there is a fertile breeding ground for justice and equality, along with tolerance and respect for diversity, progress and prosperity for all. In this regard, the dialogue of cultures and civilizations and interreligious dialogue are clearly avenues that can lead to more coordinated efforts to develop a true culture of peace.

My delegation expresses its support for an approach that involves unified action, as proposed by the Secretary-General in his report (A/65/269). Indeed, by establishing sustained momentum we can hope to make true progress towards achieving this project of the founding fathers of the Organization, that is, constructing a world that is peace-loving, prosperous for all, rich in diversity and that shares the same ideals.

Mr. Barbalić (Bosnia and Herzegovina): Allow me to begin my statement by thanking the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report on intercultural, interreligious and intercivilizational dialogue (A/65/269). We are also grateful for the annual progress report of the Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) on the International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-violence for the Children of the World, 2001 to 2010. Dialogue among peoples, cultures, faiths and civilizations is essential for the growth of the global culture of peace.

We note with appreciation UNESCO's leading role in promoting the observance of the International Year for the Rapprochement of Cultures in 2010. As the primary focus of the Year, the significant number of activities — more than 700 — was impressive, and included a variety of projects presented in fields such as the arts, education and the interests of youth. They also enjoyed broad participation by many segments of society, particularly young people.

Bosnia and Herzegovina is also very pleased with the fact that the Alliance of Civilizations, launched in 2005 and welcomed by resolution 60/1, has shown significant results. In recent years, the Alliance has managed to maintain its momentum, attract new members, build consensus among its constituents and deliver on some of its core objectives. Bosnia and Herzegovina also commends the third annual report of Mr. Jorge Sampaio, the United Nations High Representative for the Alliance of Civilizations. We greatly appreciate his enormous efforts towards the realization of the goals of the Alliance and his results-oriented approach.

Bosnia and Herzegovina wishes to confirm its commitment to participate actively in the initiatives of the Alliance of Civilizations as a member of its Group of Friends. We continue to support the principles and activities of the Alliance in promoting a culture of peace and dialogue among civilizations, religions and cultures, as dialogue can significantly contribute to strengthening mutual understanding and respect for cultural diversity.

In our view, the promotion of true dialogue among civilizations is one of the most important

political instruments for strengthening peace and prosperity in the world. In this regard, Bosnia and Herzegovina strongly supports the Alliance's constructive approach in dealing with the challenges of global relations today.

I am proud to inform the General Assembly that the Regional Strategy on Intercultural Dialogue and Cooperation in South-East Europe — the first ever within the framework of the Alliance — was adopted last December in Sarajevo, in a unique demonstration of the commitment to enhancing regional cooperation among the countries of South-East Europe. The high-level representatives of 14 countries of the region demonstrated their commitment to further promoting good-neighbourly relations, aimed at strengthening bridges between peoples and communities by promoting intercultural dialogue.

The action plan for implementing the Strategy was introduced in May this year. The same period has also seen the preparation of a regional strategy for the Mediterranean, producing a basic document for work within the Alliance of Civilizations on improving European-Mediterranean dialogue in the region over the next four years. Bosnia and Herzegovina fully supports the coordinated activities set out in the Strategy for the Mediterranean and expresses its expectation that the action plan for implementing the Strategy, whose aim is to develop regional partnerships among peoples and nations, will contribute to improving cooperation and further strengthening stability and development in the region. We therefore look forward to the ministerial conference in November, when we expect the new Strategy to be adopted.

Bringing about advanced intercultural and interreligious dialogue aimed at promoting tolerance and peace is of the highest importance for my country. We recognize that the protection of cultural heritage and the free exercise of religion while respecting traditions are among the basic fundamental rights necessary to achieving a comprehensive peace. We in Bosnia and Herzegovina have also come to the realization that dialogue must be conducted on a platform of democracy, the rule of law, respect for human rights and the dignity of the individual. We are fully aware that without open dialogue there can be no true reconciliation. In this regard, Bosnia and Herzegovina welcomes and supports all resolutions that promote intercultural, interreligious and intercivilizational dialogue.

I would like to express our satisfaction with the progress that the Alliance of Civilizations has made in recent years with projects such as the International Year of Youth on the theme of dialogue and mutual understanding. This initiative will contribute to the promotion of the ideals of peace and solidarity across generations, cultures, religions and civilizations.

Furthermore, it is of the utmost importance that we make concerted joint efforts to promote better media visibility for the Alliance and help it achieve its objectives. Implementing a more effective communications strategy is one of the priorities that needs further development. We welcome the outcome of the third Forum of the Alliance of Civilizations, held in Rio de Janeiro, which confirmed the Alliance's global scope as the leading United Nations forum dealing with intercultural dialogue and cooperation. There is no doubt that the fourth Forum, which will be hosted by the Government of Qatar in 2011, will continue with effective ways of strengthening cooperation and intercultural dialogue.

Mr. Bame (Ethiopia): I would like to thank the President for convening this joint debate on the Global Agenda for Dialogue among Civilizations and the culture of peace. I would also like to express my appreciation to the Secretary-General for his report (A/65/269) on the agenda items under consideration. My delegation believes that the report enables us to be cognizant of the activities of the United Nations and its affiliated entities with regard to dialogue among civilizations, cultures and religions.

My delegation fully associates itself with the statement of the Non-Aligned Movement.

We should recall that the Millennium Declaration, adopted in September 2000 (resolution 55/2), clearly indicated that tolerance was one of the fundamental values essential to international relations in the twenty-first century, including the active promotion of a culture of peace and dialogue among civilizations. The Declaration highlighted that globalization increased people's interconnectedness and hence brought about greater interaction between cultures and civilizations.

In that regard, the celebration in 1999 of the United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations underscored that globalization was not only an

economic, financial and technological process that could offer great benefits; it also presented us with the challenge of preserving and celebrating the rich cultural diversity of humankind and indigenous civilizations.

The challenges that we face today, be they political or otherwise, would be easier to address if dialogue among civilizations were promoted as an approach to tackling the fault lines in relationships among nations. We need to keep in mind that efforts towards peace and prosperity at the international level could be successful if the peoples of the world nurtured dialogue along cultural lines. This path of communication, we believe, can bring about understanding and respect between and among peoples of different traditions.

For us in Ethiopia, the coexistence of different peoples and long-standing tolerance among cultures and denominations is a unique heritage and way of life. In fact, we consider it a matter of survival, and the glue that holds our social fabric together in times of ordeal or foreign aggression. It is our belief that this experience of harmonious relationships among the people of Ethiopia could be exemplary for other nations and help all peoples live in peace.

The Ethiopian Federal Constitution is firmly anchored on the principle, among others, of recognizing and safeguarding individual identities and rights, as well as of ensuring the full representation and participation of all nations and nationalities in the political and socio economic activities of the country. All of that is observed without compromising our commitment to the goal of promoting unity in diversity.

Ethiopia is taking practical steps to advance the dialogue agenda. A high-level conference on the role of religion in peacebuilding and development, held from 16 to 17 June 2008 in Addis Ababa, was conducted in the presence of the President of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, religious leaders, Government officials, scholars and representatives of civil society organizations.

It is also worth mentioning that the Government of Ethiopia, in collaboration with the Spanish Government and the European Union, plans to organize a seminar on interreligious dialogue in November 2010. The seminar will bring together federal and regional Government officials, representatives of religious institutions, elders, members of academia and civil society organizations. The seminar is expected to publicize and promote the initiative of the Alliance of Civilizations in political circles, civil society and Ethiopian academic circles.

We are well aware that durable peace and prosperity can only be secured through a continuous process of dialogue among different views and interests. Ethiopia is firmly committed to advancing the objectives of the Alliance of Civilizations, which were launched in 2005 at the initiative of the Governments of Spain and Turkey and under the auspices of the United Nations. I am pleased to announce that Ethiopia, as a member of the Alliance, is currently elaborating its national plan of action for the Alliance of Civilizations.

In conclusion, I would like to reassure the Assembly that Ethiopia will always remain firmly committed and will continue to actively play its role in the pursuit of this paramount global agenda of dialogue among civilizations.

Mr. Solón (Plurinational State of Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): On behalf of the Plurinational State of Bolivia, I would like very much to welcome this debate on cultures, religions and civilizations.

Bolivia is a country that promotes the culture of peace. We have enshrined that conviction in article 10 of our new political Constitution, which rejects all forms of aggression and war to resolve any type of conflict.

Bolivia is a country that promotes the meeting of civilizations and cultures. It is for that reason that the State's new political Constitution has changed our country's name to the Plurinational State of Bolivia, for we recognize that there are 36 nations on Bolivian territory. They have the same rights and deserve the same recognition. They are all equal in the eyes of the State.

In our view, nations of the world are increasingly moving towards plurinational States. In other words, there are more nations that contain groups of civilizations and peoples with different cultures and different religions. Increasingly, we are plurinational within our own countries.

Bolivia is a country that vigorously fights discrimination and racism. We do so because the vast majority of our indigenous population has for centuries

suffered discrimination and racism at first hand. It is for that reason that we adopted a law against discrimination and racism this year. The legislation establishes a set of measures, institutions and penalties to ensure that all types of racial and other discrimination are gradually overcome and eradicated in our country.

It is worth mentioning that this law against racism is also meant to ensure that the media, as set out in the report under review (A/65/269), must provide objective information, avoid the use of stereotypes and counter any incitement to hatred and violence. For us, it is essential that, in the fight against discrimination and racism, the media play a crucial role in promoting a culture of peace and in rejecting hatred and any actions prejudicial to the minority persons and cultures that exist in many of our countries.

We note with grave concern the growing new wave of discrimination and xenophobia, especially in developed countries of the North. It must be said that among the structural causes of the phenomenon of discrimination we are witnessing are the current worsening social and economic conditions, which are deepening with time. It is essential that we recognize this fact and take concrete steps to counter it. We propose that this dialogue on cultures, civilizations and religions take on the economic dimension as well so that we can soon evaluate the impact of the economic crisis on our societies and on this dialogue among civilizations and cultures. We also believe that it is urgent to begin a discussion on an actual programme of work to set out measures to counter the wave of racism, xenophobia and discrimination that has been brought about by the world economic crisis.

For the Plurinational State of Bolivia, a world at peace is a world without discrimination or racism.

Mr. Onemola (Nigeria): Nigeria expresses its appreciation to the President of the General Assembly at its sixty-fifth session, especially for this joint debate on agenda items 14 and 15, on the Global Agenda for Dialogue among Civilizations and on the Culture of peace, respectively. We also thank the Secretary-General for the reports contained in documents A/65/269 and A/65/299.

The relevant report covers omnibus issues and reviews the activities of the major United Nations bodies concerned with the subject under review, pursuant to resolutions 60/4 and 64/81. We note in particular that the report provides detailed information on the third Forum of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations and on the progress made to date with regard to the promotion of United Nations objectives through outreach programmes, collaboration with faith-based organizations and the building of strategic awareness schemes through communication, including improving educational activities on the issue.

The special event organized by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs on 21 April 2010 at United Nations Headquarters to celebrate the International Year on the Rapprochement of Cultures pursuant to resolution 64/81 — during which the President of the General Assembly at its sixty-fourth session and the Secretary-General renewed their commitment — was significant owing to the fact that several useful proposals were made to advance action on how to further enrich our objectives in this era of globalization.

We are pleased to note that UNESCO, the lead focal point on the International Year, successfully launched an event on 18 February 2010 during which a high-level panel on peace and dialogue among cultures was held with the participation of representatives from all regions of the world. Participants from a broad section of society presented their contributions, with perspectives ranging from the political and intellectual to the religious viewpoints. The high purpose of the activities of the International Year for the Rapprochement of Cultures is to raise awareness, culminating in the production and dissemination of information and the organization of several international and regional conferences covering a variety of projects in virtually all areas where various forms of dialogue and rapprochement could take place, such as in the arts, education, culture and youth issues. At this juncture, we would like to emphasize the role of regional organizations in this endeavour, as they represent important tools that can be used positively to further our objectives.

From our perspective, we would like to reaffirm that the strategy for building a culture of peace must, however, be based on sound and established principles that can build trust and understanding among the diverse peoples of the world and enable them to navigate from their differences towards productive ends and advantages. This will involve multifaceted and broad efforts, including gaining an understanding of each other's ways of life; the establishment of

means of resolving ongoing conflicts, so as to prevent them from further degenerating; the development of institutional frameworks and relevant capacities for peace initiatives; and the mobilization of resources at the national and regional levels for peace initiatives.

Promoting peace and understanding through mutual dialogue, tolerance and respect for each other requires a collective effort. It is therefore appropriate for all of us to join hands in this endeavour in order to move our world towards a more peaceful and prosperous one. We should also unite to de emphasize agents of strife and conflict among us and pay greater attention to those issues that create a harmonious atmosphere, in an attempt to guarantee the full and fundamental human rights of all the peoples of the world.

In conclusion, we believe that the central teachings of all religions emphasize dialogue and understanding. The international community will suffer from intolerance, bigotry and violence in the absence of those virtues and encourage the growth of extremist ideologies, violence and terrorism. Nigeria abhors the intolerance that exists throughout the world and the fact that those intolerant groups have access to greater and greater resources. We must all rise to counter those deviant tendencies that promote destructive activities with serious implications for social stability, peace and development. We must collectively send a clear message to Member States concerning their responsibility to promote religious harmony and tolerance and the equality of cultural traditions, religions, creeds and faiths. Nigeria looks forward to the time when the peoples of the world will have a better understanding of the diversity in the world. Finally, we must shift our thinking from our primordial ways and reset it in accordance with the march of globalization and its attendant implications.

Nigeria remains committed to all efforts geared towards the development of a culture of peace.

Mr. Al-Nasser (Qatar) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, let me express to the President the gratitude of my country's delegation for convening this important meeting of the General Assembly to discuss the items on the global agenda for dialogue among civilizations and the culture of peace.

Although all religions and cultures have common denominators in terms of human values, the phenomena of fanaticism and religious and ethnic-based conflicts continue to worsen and pose a growing threat to healthy relations between countries.

The State of Qatar is of the firm belief that more importance should be given to the principles of dialogue among religions in order to find a solid platform for building a world that is peace-loving and understanding. That firm belief has encouraged the Emir of Qatar to host the fourth Forum of the Alliance of Civilizations in Doha, which seeks to establish a constructive dialogue among followers of varying faiths and religions in order to achieve better understanding of the principles and teachings of those religions and put them at the service of all of humankind. The State of Qatar has also hosted a number of international conferences on dialogue among religions. Those opportunities have become annual events aimed at deepening dialogue and communication. The series began with the First Doha Conference on Interfaith Dialogue held in Doha in April 2003, with the Eighth Conference to be held also in Doha from 19 to 21 October 2010 on the role of religion in the education of new generations.

The State of Qatar believes that dialogue among religions can have a positive impact on the dialogue among peoples and civilizations. From that standpoint, since the inception of the Alliance of Civilizations in 2005, our country has contributed by responding to the initiative of the former United Nations Secretary-General Mr. Kofi Annan, with the significant participation of Her Excellency Mozah bint Nasser Al Missned, the spouse of the Emir of Qatar, who participated in the High-level Group for the Alliance of Civilizations put together by Mr. Kofi Annan in 2005. That panel brought together eminent persons and major world leaders in order to forge important initiatives within the framework of the Alliance of Civilizations on education and training for young people with a view to achieving the final goal of rapprochement among peoples and cultures.

The State of Qatar supports the Alliance of Civilizations and has actively taken part at a very high level in all of the meetings of the Alliance of Civilizations that were held in Madrid, Istanbul and Rio de Janeiro to support the work programme of the Alliance and to give it the necessary momentum. That participation led to the presence of Sheikha Mozah bint Nasser Al Missned, the consort of Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, the Emir of Qatar. In order to consolidate their support, Sheikha Mozah launched a

$100 million initiative to provide jobs for young people. Since its inception, this initiative has established connections with the private sector, which created a trade incentive for world institutions to address unemployment issues among youth. It has also developed a series of projects aimed at dealing with the unemployment problem among young people, specifically in three areas: policies, science and job opportunities. These initiatives will create work, businesses and ways for young people to obtain capital. Furthermore, the State, together with the Islamic Conference Youth Forum, adopted a project to establish a youth entrepreneurs' network in Islamic countries last April. The State of Qatar has also contributed, with the Secretary to the Alliance of Civilizations, to the establishment of a programme of scholarships for young people in the city of Doha in March 2010, as an experimental programme with a number of regional organizations. The State of Qatar will host the fourth Forum of the Alliance of Civilizations in December 2011 and will cooperate to that end with the secretariat of the Alliance and member States, so that the fourth Forum will represent a new departure for the Alliance of Civilizations, provide new momentum for its noble goals and initiatives, and promote the aims of the Alliance in bridging the gap between peoples and cultures.

Mr. Ashour (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) (*spoke in Arabic*): In our meeting today we are dealing with two important items on the international agenda that are especially important because of their strong connections to international peace and coexistence among peoples in a multicultural and multireligious world and an international political environment that is sometimes inharmonious and subject to conflicts. Those conflicts are fed by racist and extremist policies and tendencies that undermine the deployment of international efforts towards rapprochement, communication and coexistence among the peoples of the world and that in the long run threaten international peace and security.

Despite the bleak picture presented by the racist and aggressive policies and actions that our world is witnessing in certain areas and the analogous reactions from militant and extremist movements in various parts of the world, the genuine political will of the majority of leaders and peoples of the world could create an environment conducive to eradicating racism and extremism among people. The United Nations has a special and major responsibility to translate that international will into concrete realities on the ground.

We are all aware of the important role that the United Nations system plays, under the direction of the General Assembly and with the participation of UNESCO, UNICEF, the United Nations Population Fund and other United Nations agencies and organs, to spread the culture of peace and non-violence and to encourage dialogue, rapprochement and alliances between civilizations, cultures and religions. Yet, we believe that the humble efforts that have been and are still being deployed by the international Organization and the mechanisms that have been adopted, though important, are inefficient and insufficient and cannot be relied on alone to realize our desired objectives. We fully realize that a reading of the history of human experience shows that policies of discrimination and racism, foreign occupation, poverty and hunger are among the major factors that give birth to and feed extremism, violence and intolerance.

My delegation has read attentively the report of the Secretary-General on intercultural, interreligious and intercivilizational dialogue (A/65/269), and the report submitted by the Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization regarding the International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-violence for the Children of the World, 2001-2010, contained in document A/65/299. The Libyan delegation appreciates the effort involved in the preparation of the two reports, their contents and the valuable information they contain, focusing on the important aspects of the issue that has been in the forefront of the world's attention in recent years, specifically since the tragic events of 11 September 2001, which have been condemned by the entire world and which have also been exploited by extremists and racists to distort the image of Islam, inciting antagonism against Islam and Muslims.

As is stipulated in General Assembly resolution 64/81 on the promotion of interreligious and intercultural dialogue and rights, understanding and cooperation for peace, the exercise of the freedom of expression involves responsibilities and duties, which call for restraint in the exercise of that right. In that respect, we have all seen and heard in the media unjustified attacks on and deliberate distortions of one of the greatest monotheistic religions of the world and of its symbols, under the pretext of the right to exercise the freedom of expression. In that regard, we cannot

but warn of the dangerous consequences of insults against Islam, attacks on Islamic symbols, attempts to distort Islamic values and principles, and discrimination against Muslims in various countries.

The culture of peace could effectively enhance respect for human rights and strengthen solidarity among peoples and nations and support dialogue among cultures and civilizations that share many common universal values. Dialogue among civilizations contributes to the realization of peace, understanding and friendship among peoples and nations, while cultural bias, incitement and hatred against other cultures and religions increase hatred and violence among peoples and nations all over the world. Consequently, it is incumbent on us all to consecrate the culture of peace and spread it among peoples. However, that should not in any respect be interpreted to mean that we can force people who are suffering racist foreign occupation to accept the status quo, renounce their legitimate rights and give up their resistance to occupation in all its forms. If we did that, then we would be supporting oppression, extremism and injustice.

In conclusion, my country emphasizes the importance of peaceful coexistence among religions and cultures as an instrument and a necessary means to strengthening international peace and security through mutual respect and tolerance and not as a pretext for conflict and confrontation. My country calls for everyone to confront all that could create or lead to conflicts and incitement to religious, cultural or racial fanaticism and to reject all forms of expression that could be provocative or could insult religious symbols or beliefs.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the observer of the Holy See.

Archbishop Chullikatt (Holy See): As the General Assembly once again considers this agenda item, my delegation takes this opportunity to reaffirm the importance of States working together to build a culture of peace, to cultivate productive and sincere relationships, to seek out and follow the paths of forgiveness and reconciliation, to be transparent in their dealings with others and to be faithful to their word. If cultures are comprised of human persons, surely human persons can form a durable culture of peace. Such an attitude is at the heart of this Organization, which was founded on a determination to live together in harmony as good neighbours, uniting to maintain international peace and security.

Concerning the promotion of a culture of peace, my delegation also takes this opportunity to affirm the importance of interreligious cooperation, mutual understanding, open-mindedness, solidarity and an improvement in overall relations among all civilizations and peoples from different cultural and religious backgrounds.

The unique contribution of religions to the promotion of a culture of peace lies in their missions to serve the spiritual and transcendental dimension of human nature. Furthermore, they contribute to respect for human life and the observance of all human rights and fundamental freedoms. Religions promote reconciliation by impelling people to move forward in a spirit of mutual cooperation. In a concrete way, they help facilitate the realization of peace, which is not merely the absence of conflict but the harmonious coexistence of individual citizens within a society governed by justice, one in which the good of all is promoted to the greatest possible extent. Religions help accomplish all that is within our human capacity.

In that regard, my delegation draws attention to the ongoing work of the Holy See for almost 40 years in reaching out to other religious traditions to promote interreligious harmony. Recent initiatives include the regular meetings of the Joint Committee for Dialogue of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue, and the Permanent Committee of the Al Azhar for Dialogue among the Monotheistic Religions, the most recent of which was held this year in Cairo. It concluded, among other things, that the many causes of violence among believers of different religious traditions include the manipulation of religions for political or other ends; discrimination based on ethnicity or religious identity; and divisions and social tensions, as well as ignorance, poverty and underdevelopment.

The Permanent Committee also made important recommendations: to open our hearts to mutual forgiveness and reconciliation for a peaceful and fruitful coexistence; to recognize what we have in common and respect legitimate differences as a basis for a culture of dialogue; to recognize and respect the dignity and rights of every human being without bias related to race, ethnicity or religious affiliation; to acknowledge the necessity of promulgating just laws

that guarantee the fundamental equality of all; and to recall the importance of education for cultivating respect, dialogue and fraternity. Those are concrete ways to oppose violence among followers of different religions and to promote peace and harmony among religions.

The recent report of the Secretary-General on intercultural, interreligious and intercivilizational dialogue (A/65/269) has highlighted the activities of various United Nations entities that contribute to the promotion of dialogue among cultures, civilizations and religions. The report also draws attention to the work of various offices and agencies of the United Nations system in promoting interreligious cooperation.

In that regard, it is important that United Nations offices and agencies engage cultures with full regard for the role of religion in those cultures. One crucial way of doing so is by not attempting to foster global and regional networks that advance principles at odds with the natural moral order — in particular, a reproductive health and rights agenda that runs counter to respect for the right to life of the unborn child. Such an approach would be an attempt to misuse religion for a particular agenda and would be disrespectful to followers of the various faith traditions.

Furthermore, my delegation wishes to draw attention to the report to the Human Rights Council (A/HRC/14/23) of the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression. That report emphasizes the role of the right to freedom of expression and freedom of access to means of communication in combating discrimination, as well as in fostering intercultural understanding and dialogue. At the same time, my delegation looks forward with interest to the series of expert workshops on the prohibition of incitement to national, racial or religious hatred that the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights will be holding this coming year.

The followers of religions can do a great deal to promote lasting peace and harmony in the world, and the Holy See is grateful for the various initiatives aimed at achieving that noble goal. For its part, my delegation remains committed to working with those of other religious and faith traditions to help bring about a culture of peace for the benefit of the entire human family, and encourages all States to fully ensure the right to freedom of religion and conscience for all people and communities, for the peaceful coexistence of all members of the human family.

The Acting President: In accordance with resolution 49/2 of 19 October 1994, I now call on the observer of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

Mr. Jilani (International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies): In the interest of saving time I will read only excerpts from my statement and will make the full statement available on our website.

Rooted in its vision and based on its fundamental principles, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) is seriously committed to promoting a global culture of respect for diversity, non-violence and social inclusion. In a recently developed IFRC global strategy on violence prevention, mitigation and response, we define the culture of non-violence as one that respects human beings, their well-being and dignity, and honours diversity, non-discrimination, inclusiveness, mutual understanding and dialogue, willingness to serve, cooperation and lasting peace.

Our fundamental principles and humanitarian values inspired the Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in Disaster Relief. To date, the Code has been signed by more than 400 non-governmental organizations. The Code helps the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and other humanitarian actors to bring together the different cultures worldwide under one set of standards for the conduct of humanitarian relief.

Last year, young volunteers from 150 countries gathered in Solferino, Italy, to mark the one hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the Battle of Solferino. The youth committed themselves to inner change and the development of skills to promote harmony and positive attitudes within communities, to live under our seven fundamental principles as agents of behavioural change and to renounce violence and promote non-discrimination and respect for diversity and the culture of peace in the world.

In that context, the IFRC's initiative under the theme "Youth as agents of behavioural change" has been launched to empower youth to play a leading role in transforming mindsets, attitudes and behaviour in

their local communities. It starts from the premise that a prior commitment to inner change and to being the living example of our fundamental principles and humanitarian values is the best way to reach that objective.

The Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement has stood for human dignity since our founding almost 150 years ago, when our founder mobilized volunteer assistance for the wounded on the battlefield in Solferino. Today, the promotion of humanitarian values continues to be at the heart of the mandate of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on these items. The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda items 14 and 15.

The meeting rose at 5.40 p.m.